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APRIL '94
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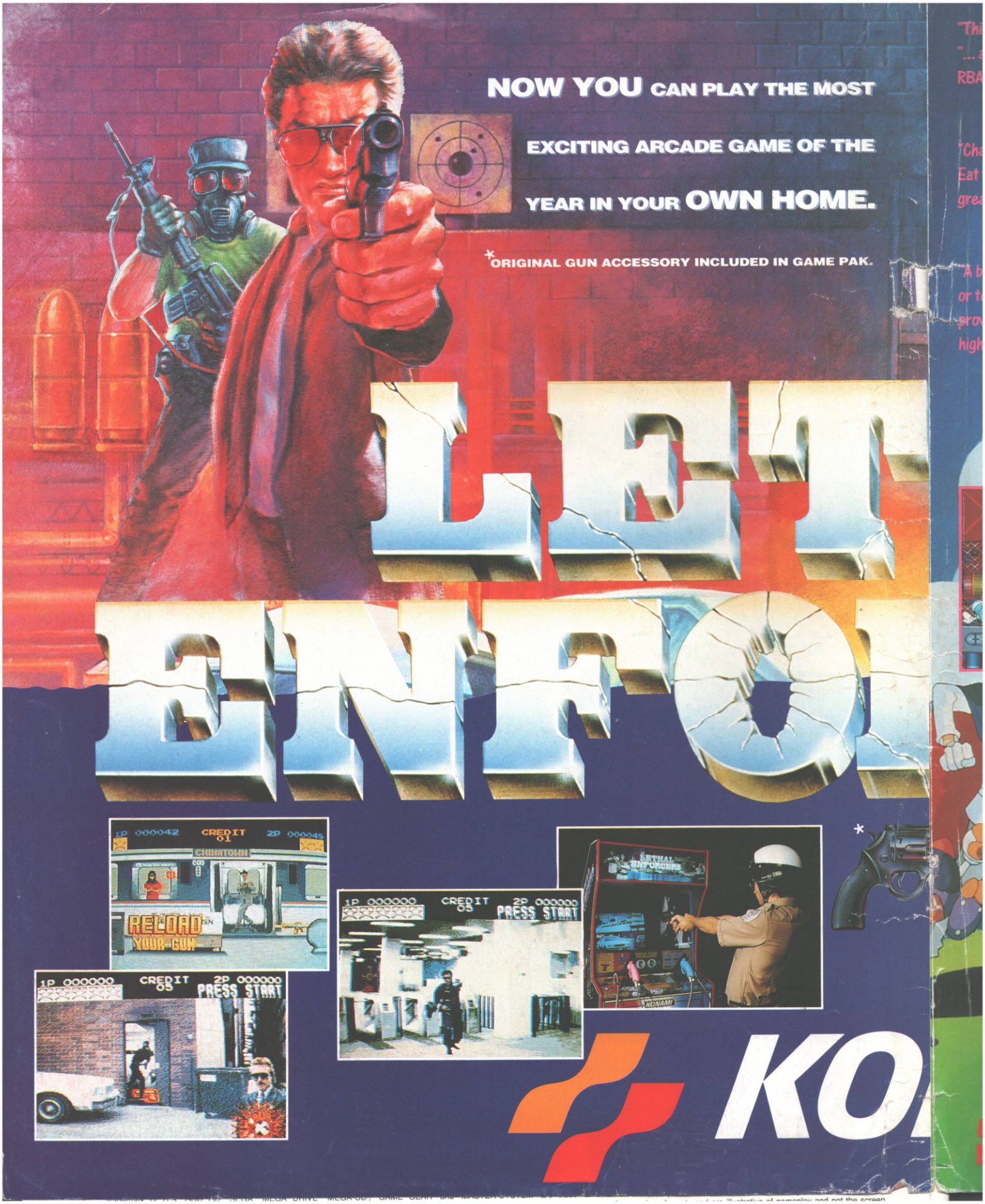
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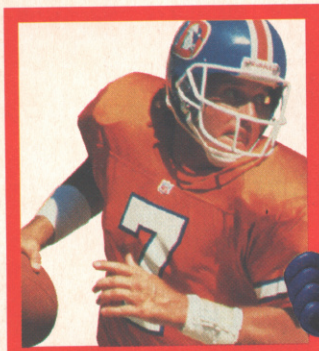

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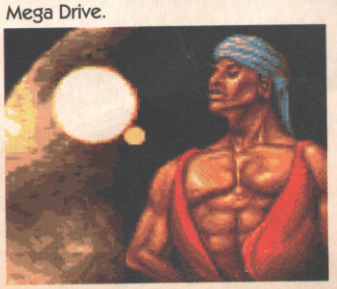

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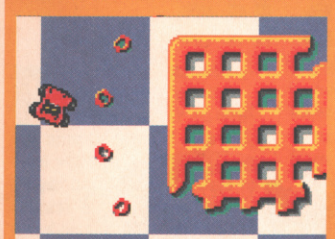

Small car racing in a miniature over-head world.

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52 WIN A COMPACT STEREO SYSTEM WITH GREMLIN.
Gremlin are still chuffed with Zools success. They say thanks with a kicking Hi-fi system for grabs, plus games and stuff.

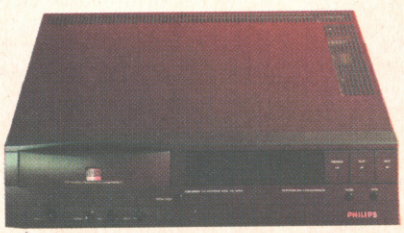
62 WIN £1,000 OF SURROUND-SOUND TV FROM IMAGINEER!
You readers are so lucky! We have to play our games on a 14-inch TV.

NEWS

All the usual new games news, plus Amstrad's venture into the CD-i market, the latest on JVC launching a rival to the Mega Drive, games certification and a chance to win Empire Strikes Back from JVC!

AMSTRAD SET TO BOOST CD-i

Philips' CD-i format is set to receive a massive boost later in the year, when Amstrad launches its own version of the machine. Nothing has been confirmed by either party yet, but CVG understands that Amstrad is particularly keen on the notion of the interactive CD market and has been looking for a way in for some time. Rather than develop a completely separate technology of its own, which is both costly and time consuming, it will licence the technology from Philips and manufacture a machine bearing the Amstrad brand name.



The firm's director of international marketing, David Hennell told CVG: "We're a firm believer in the notion of the magic black box under the television that plays games, videos, music etc. It's a market that interests us a great deal and there are a number of routes we could take -3DO, CD32 or CD-i and others as well. Most importantly, it's not the greatest idea to go out with your own standard. It's very costly and you can't do it quickly because you have to drum up support from the software houses and create a buzz surrounding the format.

"I definitely think we could make a market, certainly in Europe and Australia, with the reputation and brand that Amstrad has got for making stuff that goes under TVs."

The talk is that the firm will be able to produce a model that would sell for as little as £299. Such a price point would suddenly make CD-i technology a much more attractive proposition, providing it with a much needed boost, just when the market has reached its most competitive level for some time.

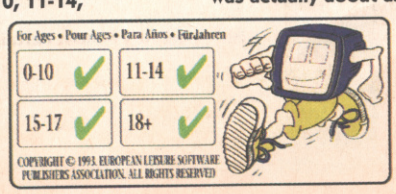
FREE 4-WAY MEGA DRIVE PLAY FOR MICRO MACHINES 2!

After the success of the Game Genie, Codemasters is planning another Mega Drive hardware coup – games with built-in multi-player adaptors. The new J*Carts, as it calls them, have an extra two joypad ports built-in to a standard sized cart, so up to four players can get to grips with a game at once. Best of all J*Cart games won't cost a penny extra, with prices starting at £34.99. The first release will be Tennis All-Stars which is pencilled in for May. But best of all, later this year, we can look forward to Micro Machines 2, which promises to be every bit as good as its predecessor, but with the added benefit of a four-player mode.

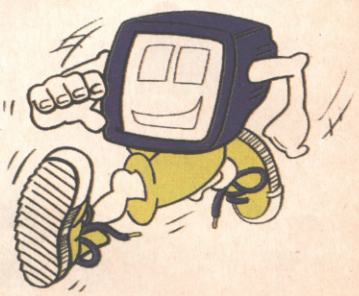
● CONTACT: CODEMASTERS 0926 814132 ●

COMPUTER SOFTWARE TO BE CERTIFICATED

It's been discussed on and off for almost 10 years now, and at last games are to get movie-style certificates. Depending on the content, games will either be getting 0-10, 11-14, 15-17 or 18+ certificates. Unlike movies, which have to be passed and certificated by the British Board of Film Classification, games certificates will be decided by the manufacturers themselves under a voluntary code.



The certification debate was first sparked off in 1984 when Palace Software released its licence of Evil Dead. Admittedly the latter game's content was actually about as frightening as an Andrex puppy, but more recently, after public pressure, Sega has decided to award one of its own titles, Nighttrap on Mega-CD, a 15 certificate.



● CONTACT: ELSPA 0386 831223 ●

AMSTRAD UNVEILS LATEST BUDGET PCS

It seems as though the failure of the Mega-PC hasn't put Amstrad off the personal computer market. Upholding its reputation for low-cost computing, it is gearing up to release a range of cheap 486 machines which it claims are completely upgradable and should run all the latest power-intensive games.

The PC9486 series will include SX and the newer DX2 machines which clock in at up to 66Mhz. The packs include SVGA card, an accelerator card for Microsoft Windows, 4MB RAM a choice of 130, 214, or 340Mb hard drives and colour monitor. While this specification is hardly remarkable, Amstrad also says its machines are fully compatible with Intel's new high-spec Pentium 586 processors, which is something many existing 486s lack. The packs start at £849.99 excluding VAT and £1,249.99 for the CD-ROM version, which comes bundled with a multimedia encyclopaedia and LucasArts' Rebel Assault. Best of all, the machines are going to be manufactured in Britain, so you don't have to go too far to complain when they go wrong.

● CONTACT: AMSTRAD
0277 228888 ●

SPEED FREAKS

Accolade is set to boost the already bulging Mega Drive driving game market with the launch of Speed Racer. It's a two-player split-screen race game, in much the same vein as Lotus, only much, much faster. Fast times over a series of laps earn you cash which can be spent improving your car with new engines and better suspension. It's due for release later this year.

● CONTACT: ACCOLADE
081-877 0880 ●

PARAMOUNT GOES MULTIMEDIA CRAZY

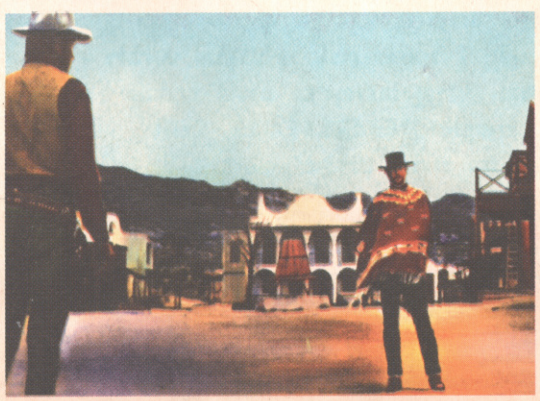
Film and TV giant Paramount Communications has become the first of the major movie companies to plunge head-long into multimedia. Spearheading its releases will be its top TV shows Star Trek: TNG and Deep Space Nine.

Deep Space Nine takes you aboard the space station as either a Bajoran, Ferengi or Federation officer to solve a mystery which changes every time you start a new game. Naturally there's plenty of FMV footage and dialogue from the show. Star Trek, on the other hand, is going to be techno-heaven for Trekkies as it's actually the Enterprise Technical manual that you'll get on the disc. Basically it lets you wander throughout the Enterprise playing with everything from the phaser controls to the dilithium crystals. Both discs are due for release in the US this autumn on Mac and PC CD-ROM.

(c) PARAMOUNT

MGM MOVIES TO BE RELEASED ON CD

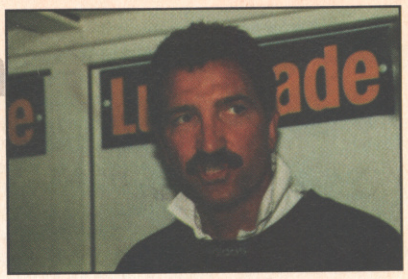
Philips' CD-i promotional juggernaut continues to thunder on with the announcement of a deal with Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer and United Artists to release 30 of its biggest films on CD. While it has yet to decide what the 30 will be, the choice is immense. Philips has access to all 16 James Bond movies as well as classics such as A Fistful of Dollars, Rocky, Raging Bull and newer films like Thelma and Louise and Benny and Joon. Definitely on its way is Sharon Stone's Sliver, which Philips is gearing up to be its biggest release this year. Even though Philips has signed the deal, the compatibility between M-PEG formats means CD32, PC and 3DO owners will also benefit from the new CD movies.



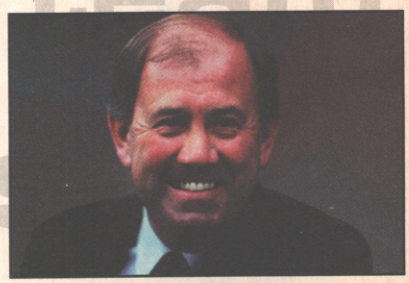
SONIC SPRINTS BACK

Never let it be said that Sega and Nintendo are above 'borrowing' ideas from each other. Currently under the development microscope is Sonic Drift, a Game Gear cart starring the spiky one himself and all the other heroes and villains from the platform games. The bad news is that Sega currently says it has no plans for a Mega Drive or Mega-CD version, but we think that it'd be such a big seller, it's almost certain to appear on the 16-bits.

● CONTACT: SEGA
071- 373 3000 ●



They couldn't manage



Forget

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This is for real.

PLAYER MANAGER gives you the chance to show your **skills** on and off the pitch. It combines the pace and the gameplay of the legendary **Kick Off** with the tough world of football management. Planning the right tactics, boosting team morale, picking your best team, managing the club's finances, wheeling and dealing in the transfer market, spotting new **talent**, even designing the team kit is down to you. The buck stops with you, the board and fans expect **results**, fail them and the boot beckons!

SNES
out now

PC & AMIGA
available
mid march

imagineer

ANCO

PC compatibles: VGA min, 386 min, hard drive installation required, Min 1MB RAM

Amiga: 500/600/1200/2000 Min 1MB RAM

Super Nintendo version published by Imagineer (UK) Ltd, Unit 16, Progress Business Centre, Whittle Parkway, Slough, Berks SL1 6DQ Tel: 0753 671686 Fax: 0753 671682

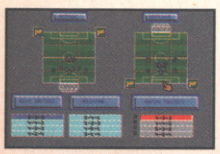
graphics which may vary considerably between formats

it...

KEVIN KEEGAN'S PLAYER Manager

He can.

Will you?



"A blinder of a game"
CVG 95%

"Best ever football management simulation"
NMS 89%

"Soccer mayhem second to none"
SNES FORCE 90%

PC compatibles and Amiga versions published by Anco Software Ltd, Unit 7, Millside Industrial Estate, Lawson Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 5BH Tel: 0322 292513 Fax: 0322 293422

X'EYE-MENT MOUNTS AT JVC AS WONDERMEGA HITS US

JVC's Mega Drive compatible Wondermega took a step closer to a European launch when it was announced that the machine will become available in the US in April - the first time it has been on sale outside the Japanese market.

The machine has been re-christened as the X'Eye for the US, something which often happens to machines when they are launched into different parts of the world (as we know, the Mega Drive is called Genesis in the US). It retails for $499 and can play audio CDs, CD+Graphics Karaoke, Electronic Book, CD-ROM, Mega-CD and a selection of Mega Drive games.

Although there has been no announcement as to when, or if, the machine will find its way into Europe, this must surely be a sign that the firm has designs on the bigger picture, and with the European video games market currently worth close to £1 billion it would be hard, if not foolish, to ignore it.

SATURN SETBACK

Word has reached our ears that Sega's new super console, the Saturn, isn't to appear in this country until Christmas next year. However, we've also heard that the machine is due for a simultaneous world-wide launch. And, as the general opinion in Japan is that the machine is to be released early '95, someone, somewhere is telling porkies. Another rumour we've picked up on our substantial grapevine is that Sega is already working on a portable version of the Saturn, provisionally called the Jupiter. If this is true it's likely to appear 6-12 months after the Saturn machine itself.

GUNHED VIDEO FOR UK

Gunhed, arguably one of the most successful Japanese sci-fi creations since Godzilla, is set to appear on video over here in June.

Basically Gunhed's are giant super robots, similar to the Hunter Killers of the Terminator movies, only far larger and much more dangerous. The film has overtones of Aliens, with a group of futuristic troops infiltrating a deserted base, only to come under attack and be helped out by two children. The effects are decent, the action enormous and we think it's ace. If you can't wait until summer, you can check it out when it hits these cinemas:

March 18-24	Prince Charles Cinema, London
April 2	Cardiff Odeon
April 9	Robins Hyde Park Cinema,Leeds
April 15+16	Birmingham Odeon
April 23	Manchester Odeon
April 30	Glasgow Odeon
May 7	Edinburgh Odeon
May 14	Robins 051 Cinema, Liverpool

● CONTACT: PARTRIDGE & STORES 081-747 9080 ●

BRITAIN A NATION OF COMPUTER SADDOS

A recent Key Note survey has found that just 21% of British adults reckon that computers are easy to use. Meanwhile 68% think kids spend to much time using computers. Considering the average under-18 year-old has practically no trouble using the latest computer technology, maybe its time the 79% of adults who struggle with computers took a lead from the youth they accuse of spending too much time at the keyboard.

TROLL ARMY

Gametek is changing direction somewhat following the monumental success of Frontier. It's next release will be Trolls for the SNES, a licence of those little placcy creatures with the big hair.

It'll be predominantly platform-based, with some puzzle elements, which are based around you controlling one of four Trolls, each of which have different powers. If the game sells anything like as well as the trolls do, it's bound to be a massive success. Other versions are planned, and we'll bring you more news of them as, and when, we find out.

● CONTACT: GAMETEK 0753 553445 ●

VIRGIN CAPTURES SENSIBLE

Undisputed champion of the footy sim, Sensible Software, has tied its colours to the mast of Virgin Interactive for the foreseeable future.

Sensible has signed a long term deal with the publisher and as a result the first title to surface is likely to be Sensible Golf on PC and Amiga towards the end of the year. Console versions of the game will follow in 1995.

Virgin has also clinched Sensible's Amiga hit Cannon Fodder, scheduled for release on SNES and Mega Drive before we hit 1995.

● CONTACT: VIRGIN 081-960 2255 ●

LOW PRICE FOR SANYO 3DO

Sanyo's version of the 3DO is due out in Japan in April priced around £400. This makes it cheaper than the Panasonic machine, although there are still no details on a UK launch or price. It's also been rumoured that the Panasonic machine has undergone some minor hardware changes to overcome the problems of slow access and hardware crashes that the early models suffered from.

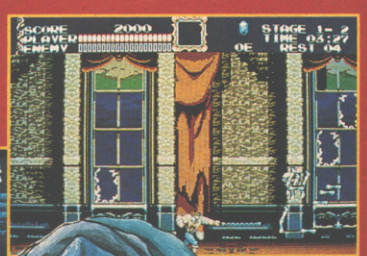
SEGA

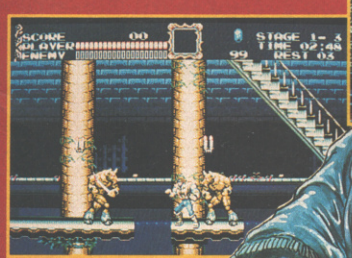
MEGA DRIVE

A spine tingling, blood curdling 6 level living nightmare from hell.

Castlevania®

The New Generation





As John Morris the whip wielding vampire hunter, or Eric Lecarde, master lanceman, you'll chase the demonic vampiress Countess Bartley across Europe to prevent her resurrecting the master of all evil - Count Dracula.

KONAMI

Konami (UK) Limited Konami House 54a Cowley Mill Road Uxbridge Middlesex UB8 2QE

CHARTS

Clearly there's no mad March hares out there this month as the majority of software on offer is of a surprisingly high quality. See for yourself...

HMV KNOW HMV · KNOW GAMES

ALL-FORMATS

1 SIM CITY 2000
(PC/Mac, Mindscape)

A PC/Mac game is the number one game on the all-formats chart. Is no-one buying carts or what?

2 SUPER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
(SNES, Bandai)
3 GROUND ZERO TEXAS
(Mega CD, Sony)
4 MICROCOSM
(Mega CD, Sony)
5 FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER
(Mega Drive, Electronic Arts)
6 ZELDA: LINKS AWAKENING
(Game Boy, Nintendo)
7 SKIDMARKS
(Amiga, Acid Software)
8 SENSIBLE SOFTWARE
(Mega Drive, SNES, Game Gear) Sony
9 TURTLES- TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS
(Mega Drive/SNES, Konami)
10 FRONTIER- ELITE 2
(Amiga/PC, Gametek)

HMV KNOW HMV · KNOW GAMES

MEGA DRIVE

1 GROUND ZERO TEXAS
(Sony)

It may be a CD game, but Ground Zero Texas has been blessed with great gameplay.

2 ETERNAL CHAMPIONS
(Sega)
3 ALADDIN
(Sega)
4 SONIC SPINBALL
(Sega)
5 TOE JAM AND EARL 2
(Sega)
6 FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER
(Electronic Arts)
7 MICROCOSM
(Psygnosis)
8 SENSIBLE SOCCER
(Sony)
9 ZOMBIES
(Konami)
10 STREETFIGHTER II CE
(Sega)

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SNES

1 SUPER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
(Bandai)

SESB is keeping two excellent games off the top spot, but that's no surprise is it?

2 SENSIBLE SOCCER
(Sony)
3 TURTLES TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS
(Konami)
4 MARIO ALL STARS
(SNES)
5 STREETFIGHTER II TURBO
(Nintendo)
6 STRIKER
(Elite)
7 SUPER MARIO KART
(Nintendo)
8 MORTAL KOMBAT
(Acclaim)
9 LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA
(Konami)
10 SHADOWRUN
(Bandai)

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AMIGA

1 CANNON FODDER
(Virgin)

Virgin is releasing some cracking products on the Amiga at present. Expect to see Cool Spot in the Top 10 next month.

2 FRONTIER – ELITE 2
(Gametek)
3 JURASSIC PARK
(Ocean)
4 ALIEN BREED 2
(Team 17)
5 MORTAL KOMBAT
(Virgin)
6 SKIDMARKS
(Acid Software)
7 PREMIER MANAGER 2
(Gremlin)
8 WINTER OLYMPICS
(US Gold)
9 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS
(Ocean)
10 RYDER CUP
(Ocean)

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PC

1 SIM CITY 2000
(Mindscape)

It was going to need a quality game to knock Alone in the Dark 2 from the top and boy is Sim City 2000 that game.

2 ALONE IN THE DARK 2
(Infogrames)
3 SAM AND MAX
(US Gold)
4 REBEL ASSAULT
(CD-Rom) (US Gold)
5 STAR TREK: JUDGEMENT RITES
(Interplay)
6 FRONTIER – ELITE 2
(Gametek)
7 INDY CAR RACING
(Virgin)
8 CREATIVE WRITER
(Microsoft)
9 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS
(Ocean)
10 RYDER CUP
(Ocean)

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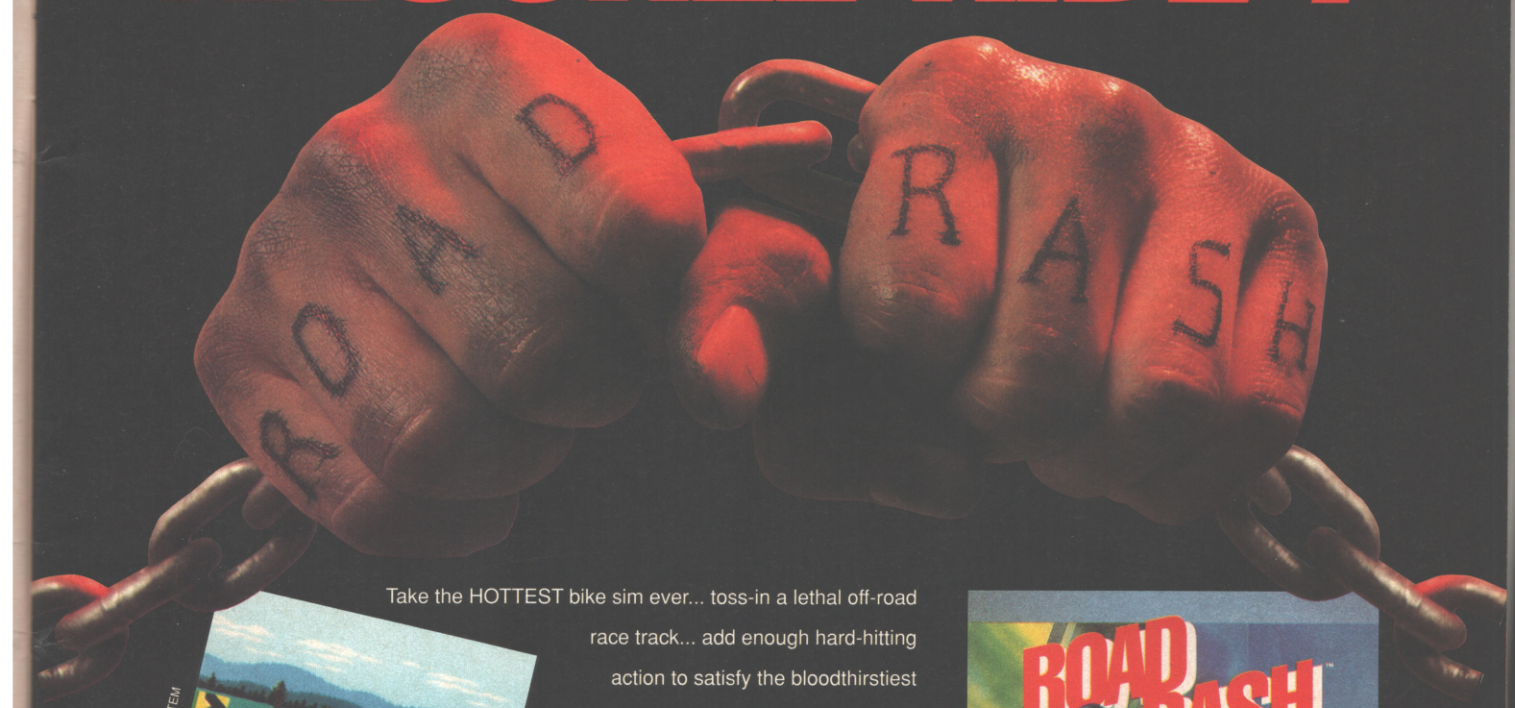
THE...WHITE KNUCKLE RIDE!



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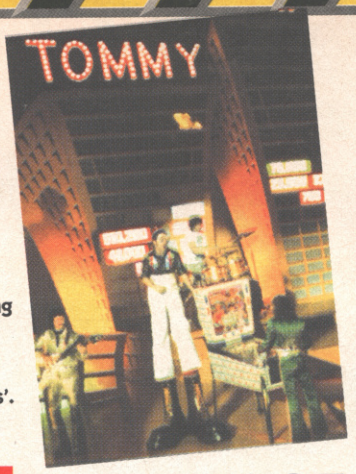
NEWS

BECOME A GAMES MASTER OF ARTS

For those of you who fancy being the next Archer Maclean, you can now hone your talent and spend three years down the pub at the same time by enrolling for a university course in games design. The course has been put together with the help of Sega, Domark, and Ocean and offers both a Bachelor of Arts and Master's Degree in 'The design and production of interactive games'. The first course starts this September at Middlesex University with other faculties expected to follow suit.



THERE HAS TO BE A TWIST...

People try to put 'em down you know, just because they g-g-get around, but rock dinosaurs The Who continue their sell-by-date defying antics. Now it looks as if the band is set to appear in a console version of their Seventies 'rock opera' Tommy. U$ development team R/GA Interactive is currently working on the game which is being produced in conjunction with the band's Uberlicksmeister supreme Pete Townsend. Quite what they'll do with it is still unknown, although our money's on a straight pinball game with a Who soundtrack. After all, no one under the age of 30 can make any sense out of the film anyway.

MINDSCAPE HULKS OUT

Bandanas and baby oil ahoy! The Software Toolworks/Mindscape has picked up the rights to Thunder in Paradise - the latest venture from Hulk Hogan. Described as a cross between Baywatch and The A-Team, the series has been running in the US since March and is set to hit British screens this summer. It's not yet clear which channel will take the series, but you can bet your life it ends up in that 5.15 Saturday evening slot on ITV. Work has already begun in the US on a SNES game of the series which is expected to be available in November. Other formats will also follow later in the year.

● CONTACT: MINDSCAPE 0444 246333 ●

DIZZY DOES THE TREBLE

Codemasters' lovable... erm... egg type thing, Dizzy, can now claim something of a first, featuring in what is, apparently, the first original triple game cartridge available from a Sega publisher.

Released this month (April), on Mega Drive, Master System and Game Gear, Excellent Dizzy features Dizzy the Adventurer, Go Dizzy Go, and Panic! Dizzy which itself features three puzzle games within – Shape Shifter, Dizzy Dice and Picture Puzzler.

In addition, the firm has been ever so nice to your pocket and announced a range of new Sega titles retailing from a meagre £21.99. The line up includes CJ - Elephant Fugitive on Game Gear, Dino Basher on Game Gear and Master System and Archer Maclean's Drop Zone, also on Master System and Game Gear.

Titles on the Megadrive are at the slightly higher £29.99 price point, but still cheap, the first one being Captain Dynamo in October.

● CONTACT: CODEMASTERS 0926 814132 ●

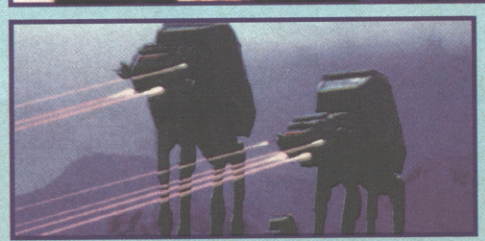
WIN EMPIRE STRIKES BACK!

At long last Super Empire Strikes Back is coming out officially, and to celebrate the launch JVC is generously giving away five copies of the game plus strictly limited edition T-shirts.

We awarded the game a whopping 94% in our November issue and we reckon that it's one of the best film tie-ins ever. It starts with Luke on the ice world Hoth, and he must fight off the snow beasts before tackling Imperial AT-ATs and heading off to Dagobah, where Yoda teaches him a bit about using the force. Finally it's off to the Cloud City to rescue his pals so everyone can live happily ever after, except Han, who doesn't get rescued until the next film.

All you have to do is tell us what Darth Vader's name was before he took to wearing black plastic outfits and joe-boying for the Emperor. Answers must reach us by 15 April 1994, or we'll feed them to our eco-friendly recycling unit. Send entries to: Leave Them to me, I will deal with them myself compo, CVG, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1.

Guess what? This compo is not open to employees of Emap or JVC or to the Emperor and Dark Lord of the Sith. The editor's decision, as always, is final.



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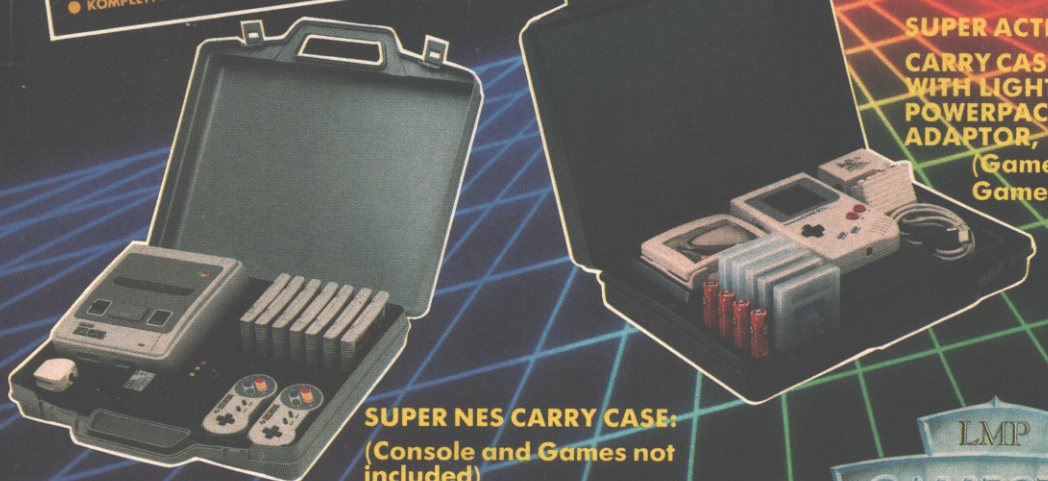

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ARCADE ACTION - THE 1994 ATEI

The European arcade trade show (ATEI) helps determine what coin-ops are going to fill the arcades of 69 different countries from around the world. It's the biggest exhibition of its kind in Europe, so CVG was there to look beyond the paraphernalia and to ask 'Where have all the new, good and original coin-ops gone?'

The lure of free coin-op games is enough to tempt any arcade pundit to the Arcade Trade Exhibition International, but more importantly is whether once the free play switch is flipped to pay are the punters going to be enticed back into the arcades. Certainly, this year's ATEI show has looked far more promising, mainly because it has moved to the spaciousness of Earls Court 1, and with it have come over 230 exhibitors.

Even so, there seems to be very little on show to be impressed with. Sure, there's Virtua Fighters, Mortal Kombat II and Ridge Racer (reviewed on pages 85 & 82), which are without doubt the most desirable games around at the moment, but the fact remains that most decent London arcades already had these machines before the show. So there are no big games debuting at ATEI.

This time last year

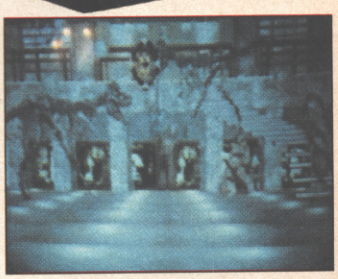
It was a different story last year though, especially with the exclusiveness of Virtua Racing and Streetfighter II Championship Edition. Perhaps the industry has squeezed itself dry. Too many coin-op developers are playing it safe by sticking to established game genres, and the result of this is that improvements tend to end up purely in the cosmetic department, with additional enhancements, like wide screen and digital surround sound. What the industry needs is a revolution in game design not an evolution, and that could come from something as simple as more creative programming.

Virtual Reality is still a long way off from being the industry saviour some speculated it would be. The enhanced hardware route is one area where Capcom at least has plenty to shout about with its new CPSII hardware platform (see opposite), predictably shown-off with a convoy of Super Streetfighter II machines. Two new CPSII games have also received a showing in the shape of Eco Fighters and Dungeons & Dragons.

Art of Fighting 2 from SNK is a damn sight better than most of the sad Streetfighter II and Mortal Kombat II rip-offs that are doing the rounds at present, thanks to heaps of special moves and combos. (AOF2 on the Neo Geo is reviewed on page 64.)

Namco's Air Combat has managed to attract plenty of dealer interest, which is hardly surprising since it puts home versions of flight sims to shame because because of its realism factor.

Virtua Fighter, Sega's graphical masterpiece has wowed the crowds, but the gameplay is worryingly slow and shallow.



Another graphics feast from Sega, but Jurassic Park looks like a run-of-the-mill Operation Wolf clone gameplay wise.

Bigger than life

The best stands at the show however, belong to Namco. Its Ridge Racer set-up shows three different machine configurations from the standard single screen cabinet to a life-size projected version which must be at least 20 feet wide! Air-Combat and Cyber Sled also seem to have received a lot of dealer interest plus also on show has been the familiar looking Suzuka 2.

Arguably the most visually impressive graphics at the show have been at Sega's stand. The Daytona demo certainly is a real crowd puller with its startling vector-based graphics. But what has failed to impress is Sega's Jurassic Park game, which just looks like another mindless Operation Wolf clone with up-to-date graphics.

Virtua Fighters has also been attracting the crowds to the Sega stands, with its awesome graphics, which look stunning on the deluxe large monitor version. Still, once the crowds actually start to play the game their interest wanes when Virtua's shallow and slow gameplay becomes apparent. We've even discovered the special moves, but believe us, these don't do much to enhance gameplay either, and are frustrating and difficult to pull off.

THE EASIER WAY TO BIGGER AND BETTER GAMES

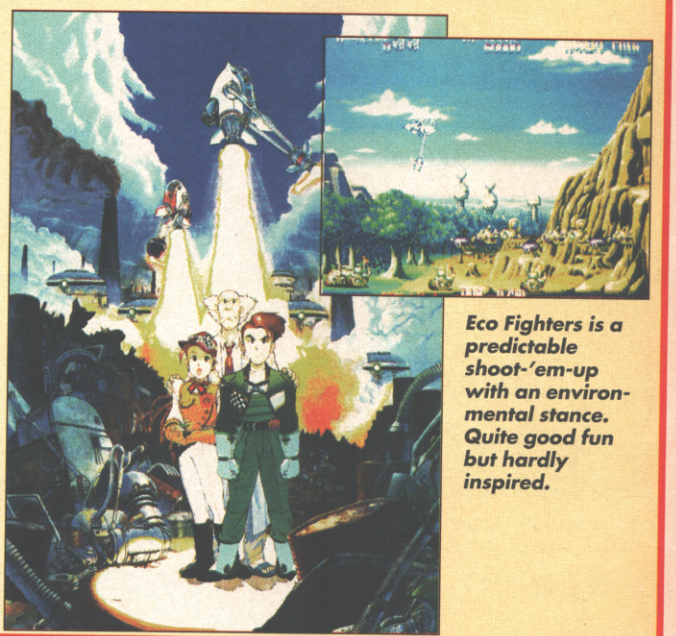
Capcom's CPSII hardware encloses the PCB mother board in a case which enables new games to be slotted in with ease – much like a cartridge. Apart from being more economical, the hardware also provides protection against pirate PCB boards. The CPS II has communication abilities for link-ups, and with its enhanced chip-set offers a faster CPU, better image resolution and the exclusive QSound 3D audio system. The unit itself is about the size of a video player. The games shown here are a result of that technology

Dungeons & Dragons is a Golden Axe type game for up to four players offering an awful lot of healthy hack-and-slash action for your money.

Another of the new CPS II games. Need we say more?

Oh dear. Although ground-breaking at the time this Hard Drivin' style of game from Atari doesn't cut the mustard any more. Airborne's graphics are slow and lacklustre compared to other racing games like the sexy Ridge Racer.

The first Suzuka game was a deserved top seller for Namco with its brilliant handling, but this sequel is much of the same, but is good fun. Who said originality was dead? Namco obviously.



Eco Fighters is a predictable shoot-'em-up with an environmental stance. Quite good fun but hardly inspired.

Hyper Dunk is not a cheesy game but it's sadly lacking in the gameplay stakes compared to Midway's NBA JAM. Much the same could be said of the home conversions too.

Konami's arcade products in general have been disappointing and not a patch on the many classic games they've released on console over the last year like Tiny Toons, Turtles Tournament Fighters and Rocket Knight Adventures.

Boxing clever

The most unmissable stand at the show has to be the huge Virtuality stage though, where visitors have been playing some much improved, but still simple looking, games. Best of all being VR Boxing.

So that's ATEI for 1994, and although CVG has been lucky enough to play everything on 'free play' we haven't forgotten that these games are increasingly costing too much to play. Coin-ops seem to be turning into an over priced luxury rather than an inexpensive extravagance, just look at the deluxe version of Ridge Racer with its genuine strapped-on Mazda sports car as a prime example.

Essentially, novelties like sitting in a real car to play a racing game does not a good game make; especially not a long lasting one that will keep arcade addicts high on their addiction. And sadly there doesn't seem to be a new coin-op that's going to generate the income that SFII and Virtua have managed to over the last year. At the end of the show the sentiment seems to be: 'less gimmicks - more gameplay'.

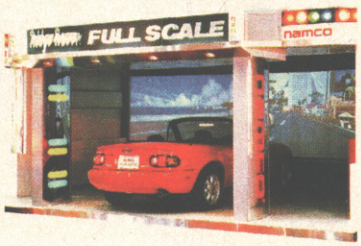
SHOW REPORT

The ultimate arcade driving experience is what Namco and Sega are aiming for with their Ridge Racer and Daytona racing games, but can the gameplay match the impressive arcade machines and stunning graphics?

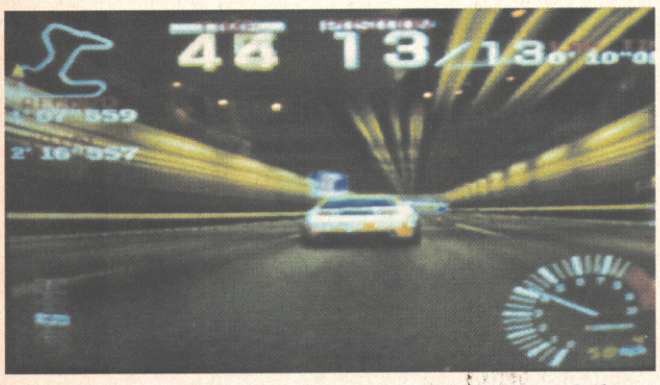
RIDGE RACER – NAMCO

Certainly the highlight of an otherwise disappointing ATEI show has to be Ridge Racer, since its graphics just ram the competition off the road. Based on Namco's new System 22 3D-CG board, it's a 32bit CPU running a custom Namco texture mapping graphic engine. With awesome draw speed calculations System 22 has blessed Ridge Racer (and will no doubt bless future releases) with Gourad shading and depth cueing for every polygon on screen. There's a very realistic steering wheel with positive feedback, (none of the silly vibrating effects you usually find), six-speed manual gearbox plus clutch, accelerator and brake of course.

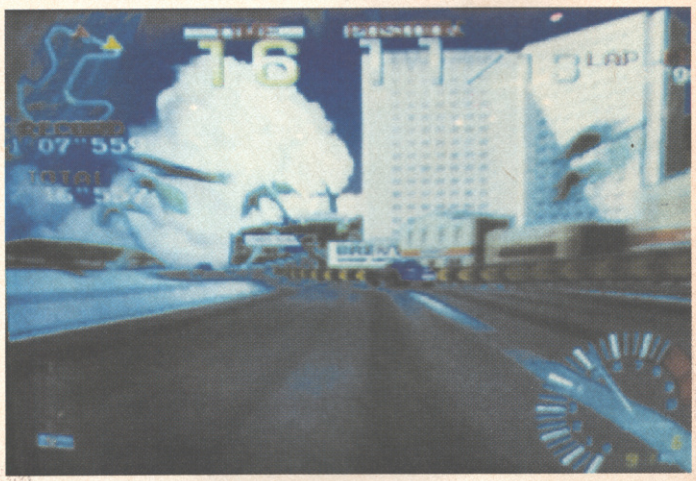
The game comes in the usual sit down version but far more impressive is the Full-Scale system which incorporates a real Mazda MX-5 and a curved 20 foot screen, which is reminiscent of Namco's other biggie machine Galaxian 3. Ridge Racer offers all the usual playing modes for beginners to experts and the game itself takes the familiar route of requiring checkpoints to be reached for the game to continue. (Turn to page 82 for the full review in Arcade Action.)



Custom hardware, top notch graphics, explosive sound. Ridge Racer is a dream for your average technophile.



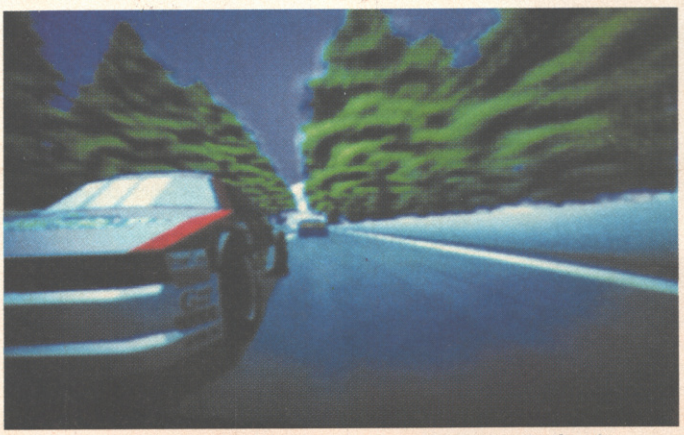
You could be forgiven for thinking this was a photograph if it wasn't for the on-screen dials and information, eh?

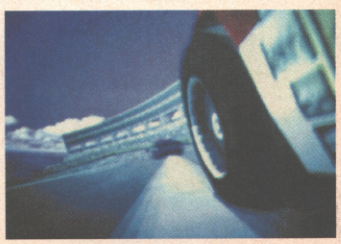


The attention to detail in Ridge Racer is stunning. As the game progresses the sky darkens to represent the march of time.

DAYTONA – SEGA

The only other racing game from the current crop that can match Namco's beast in the graphic stakes is Daytona. At present this game is only about 70% complete and the version we saw was simply running from videotape, so comparisons with Ridge Racer are unfair. However if Sega can get the finished game running anything like the speed we've seen it running here, and with the same breathtaking graphics, not to mention some gameplay then this could be the one to watch for.





Daytona, Sega's graphically awesome racing game is shaping up to be something special. Watch out for more news soon.

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VIRTUALITY

Donning his headset Rik Skews launches himself into Virtuality's latest arcade experiences

The Virtuality stand at ATEI has been showing off three new gcoin-ops. These look a heck of a lot more interesting and detailed than other VR games in the arcades which is probably due to some major advancements in the hardware being used. Those ugly head-sets have also been slimmed down, and now they're a more comfortable and compact size. The new buzz word for VIrtuality at the moment though, seems to be 'immersive'. This word is supposed to convince you that virtual reality has finally reached the stage of interactivity, which it was supposed to offer at the outset.

Even so, the gameplay on all machines still seems annoyingly sluggish and rather mundane; which begs the question: can the VR approach offer enough of a tease and excitement. This is particularly true with the Virtuality Boxing game. The problem with punching into air is you get no sense of impact, which makes it difficult to judge how much effort you should be putting into your punches. Anyway, the moves available are plentiful and there are some nice effects like swollen lips, bent noses and flying gumshields.

Looking to lower your credibility rating? Then try wearing one of these VR helmets.

Check out the realism of the hills in the background. VR games are rapidly losing their polygon look.

Although the graphics and speed of the new generation of machines has been improved dramatically it's still hard to believe you're there with a ton of plastic and glass on your head.

Look at the detail on the face. Makes Virtua Fighter look pretty tragic don't you think?

The most playable game has to be Zone Hunter, a futuristic commando type affair where you battle through a city in search of a genetics laboratory where you have to dispose of mutated life forms. This game has a very nice feel to it, and there are hefty weapons to be discovered too. What seems a bit unfair however, is that there are set time limits in the game, which could be frustrating when you're paying a lot of money for each go.

The last machine we managed to climb aboard, X-Treame Strike, is a Star Wars type game where you fly across a planet surface taking out defences and other craft en route to destroying a core reactor. You're given unlimited firepower but you'll spend a lot of time searching for fuel. This game is smooth and fast with its graphics handling, but some of the terrain could be a bit more detailed.

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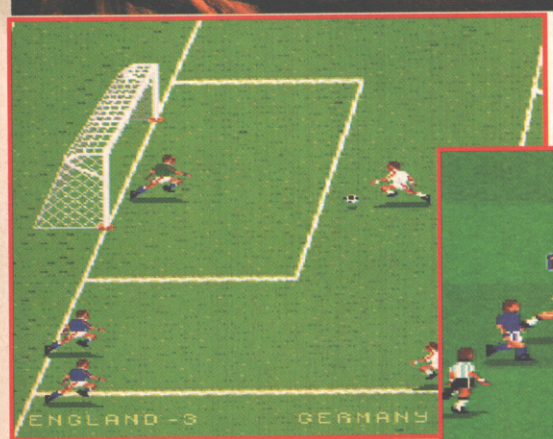
KICK OFF 3

Three years since the launch of one of the best soccer games ever, Anco gets ready to release the third incarnation of the title that set the precedent for footie games!

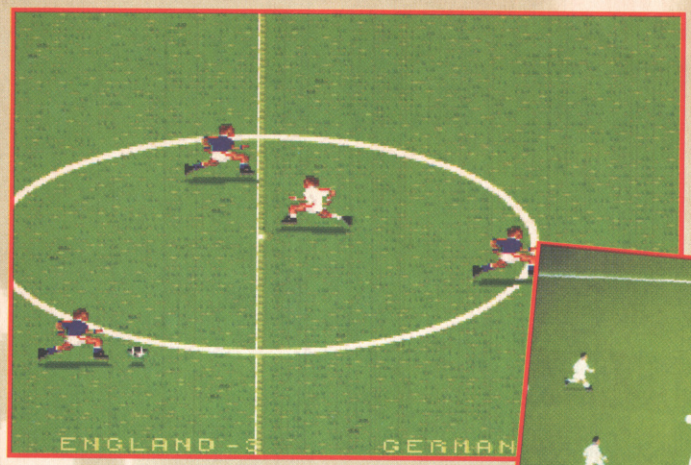
(SNES) A real battle ensues as the French try to bring the fleet-of-foot Irishman to a halt.



(Mega Drive) Germany advance on goal, but the keeper looks to have it covered.

(SNES) A crunching tackle from the Argentinian number 11 on the unfortunate Italian.

(SNES) Eire score another goal, and dance a jig in celebration!



(Above) More Mega Drive action. (Right and below) The Jaguar version is coming on well – look out for it in a couple of months.

Kevin Keegan's Player Manager, Anco is gearing up for the launch of its most hotly anticipated game yet – Kick Off 3.

Dino outdone?

To be available on most popular formats, Kick Off 3 has been in production for over 12 months, and has been the topic of rumour for some considerable time too, the most popular piece of hearsay being that the game would never appear after the departure of Kick Off 1 & 2 programmer, Dino Dini, from Anco to Virgin. As it happens, the finished product bears almost no relation to any of Dini's previous football games, including the VIE-published unofficial Kick Off sequel, Dino Dini's Goal!.

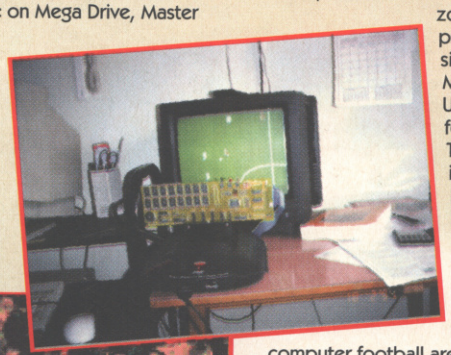
As you can see from these ouch! hot screenshots, taken from the beta test versions of the game given exclusively to CVG, Kick Off 3 has undergone some serious cosmetic surgery in comparison to its prequels. Whereas the originals were vertically scrolling, bird's-eye view affairs, Kick Off 3 is depicted in horizontally scrolling, pseudo 3D, very similar to the Manchester United games of four years back. That, however, is the only similarity between the two titles – Kick Off 3 promises to be one of the biggest names in the computer football arena.

Sensible Soccer. FIFA Soccer. Super Soccer. Virtual Soccer. Everybody knows the names of these fine football simulations. But there's one game which shall stick in the minds of all who have played it and loved it, and it doesn't even have the word 'Soccer' in the title – Kick Off.

Released in 1988 by a small software house called Anco – which had before then made its coin from such niche products as strip poker games – Kick Off became one of the biggest selling floppy titles ever seen, notching up figures of hundreds of thousands. A phenomenon was born, as was a string of follow-ups – Anco brought out a management game based around the Kick Off engine, followed by the now-legendary Kick Off 2 and an array of expansion disks to complement the product.

Since then, Anco has jumped into bed with massive Japanese firm Imagineer who released Kick Off on SNES, NES and Game Boy, and they also sold the Kick Off licence to US Gold who promptly put out versions of the title on Mega Drive, Master System and Game Gear. Now, fresh from the successful SNES launch of

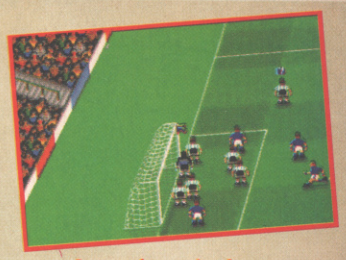
(SNES) Not so lucky this time, as the Argie goalie makes a relatively simple save in the six-yard area.



(Mega Drive) The KO3 crowd on Mega Drive is more advanced than its SNES counterpart, but has yet to be animated.

Play the game

Produced by Steve Screech, who was also heavily involved in all of Anco's previous football titles, Kick Off 3 is geared for release just before the World Cup finals in July this year, and the game will have a World Cup tournament in which all the teams that actually qualified for the event will appear. Unlike other soccer games however, which usually field sides that bear no relation to their real-life counterparts, Screech has devised a system that allows the computer to play in styles very similar to those which international teams ☛

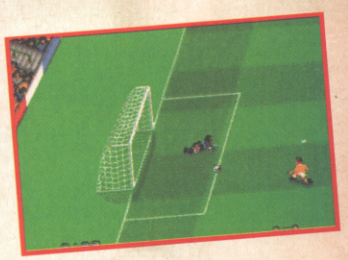


Argentina win the corner.

Choose a set play.

Rough tackling on SNES.

Sliding in on the goal.



A loose ball – run for it!

A great stop.

(Mega Drive) And it's a goal! England walk the ball over the line, while the keeper just flaps on the floor. MD Kick Off 3 should be out at the same time as the SNES version, so Anco tells us.

actually play. 'Playmakers' have been included in the sides, and these lads behave very differently to the normal, run-of-the-mill Johnny Scorer.

England 1 Germany 2

When a playmaker takes possession of the ball, he won't just knock it on to the nearest player. What he does is look at the position of the boys up front and attempt to open up play by making a telling pass, with a view to a goal being scored.

This is not only a revolutionary concept in itself, but these types of players aren't ten-a-penny in the real game, so don't expect Kick Off 3 sides to be jam-packed with them. England, for example, has Paul Gascoigne controlling the play from midfield, so you'll find the Kick Off 3 version of the team will have its playmaker in a similar position to that which Gazza plays in. And we know that England didn't qualify for the World Cup, but Screech says he's putting them in anyway.

Germany, on the other hand, has two playmakers who, unlike England who pass the ball out to the wings, prefer instead to pass straight forward in order to break quickly. Brazil has three playmakers to accentuate their flair play, while the South Koreans, who try to play in a similar style to Brazil's but end up sorely lacking, have no playmakers. Because they're poor.

Sounds smart on Jag

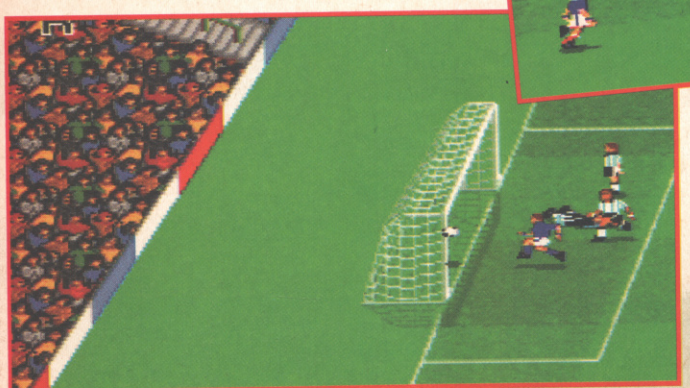
Of the versions we've seen, the SNES game is the most complete. All the gameplay is in there, and in fact all that needs to be added is the sound, as well as a few little cosmetic tweaks such as the inclusion of an animated crowd and the like.

We'll be bringing you a full review of the game in a very short while – as it stands though, it looks like an absolute winner – especially as the game is being released before EA's SNES conversion of FIFA International Soccer.

On the Mega Drive front, things are moving at a fair old rate; the graphics are completed and the gameplay is similar to the SNES game, although there are a few bugs lurking around which still need to be ironed out before release.

Floppy disk versions of Kick Off 3 are still in the early stages of development, but perhaps the most exciting version has to be on Atari's 64-bit monster, the Jaguar.

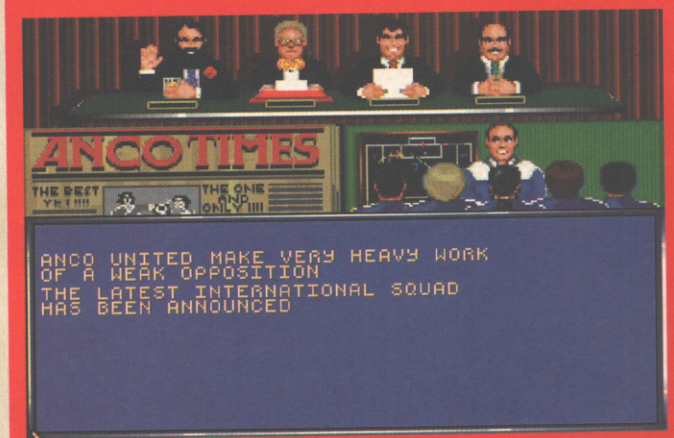
Using a similar but souped-up engine to that used in the other versions, Kick Off 3 on Jag will feature stunning, almost photorealistic player sprites and incredible CD-quality sound effects – and because of the data compression technique used on Jaguar cartridges, there should be much more in there than you'll find on the current crop of consoles. Oh yes – it's also set to be the first Jaguar release from a third party software company, which is a bit of a coup in anybody's book.



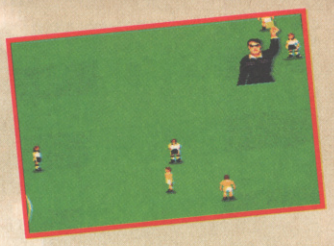
(SNES) The action replay shows a simple tap-in on the part of the Italians. You can tailor the replay to show the action at a variety of speeds.

COMING SOON TO A COMPUTER NEAR YOU!

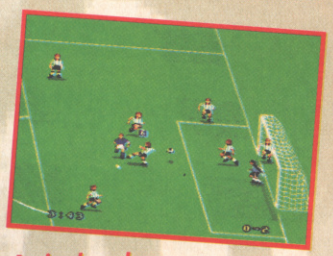
Floppy disk versions of Kick Off 3 are still in the relatively early stages of development so there's nothing to show you as yet, but just so's you don't feel left out, here's a shot of Kevin Keegan's Player Manager. Converted from SNES, this fine football management game endorsed by the Keeg himself was a cracker on cartridge, and there's no reason why it shouldn't be at least as good on disk. Completion times willing, we'll be reviewing Kevin Keegan's Player Manager next month, so make sure you don't miss the May issue of CVG!



Kevin Keegan's Player Manager is nearing completion on Amiga and PC – look out for the reviews soon.

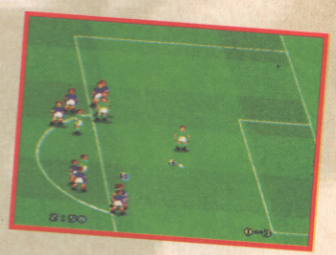


A yellow card for the naughty German.



A nice knock-on.

The keeper throws out.



Penalty to the Irish!

An obvious free-kick, there.

VCR-like replays feature.

Wolfenstein 3D

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And those football games keep coming! Here comes the Acclaim team with its shot at soccer glory!

Console soccer games are like the proverbial buses aren't they? You wait ages, watch loads of American Football buses drive past and then, just when you're getting switched on to NBA basketball buses, you get a trillion soccer buses all at once. Or something like that.

This sports presenter's really boring. We want Alan Partridge!

The Colombians versus the Brazilians. Well, we can expect some fireworks tonight. Those Brazilians know all about fireworks, of course. They're regularly used in their Mardi Gras festivities. To us, that's Shrove Tuesday of course, when we replace the fireworks... with pancakes.

Ryan Giggs CHAMPIONS

Action replays are absolutely tremendous, aren't they? Here we can see how the Brazilian goalkeeper destroys his team's chances of winning by his ineptitude. That's all the evidence we need to condemn him to a long spell in Football Prison. Good riddance to bad rubbish.

We're witnessing a spate of South American tumbling down pitchside. Highly exciting!

The Spanish striker steals the Brazilian's watch but the thief is tackled by a heroic goalkeeper.

Anyway, Acclaim's entry into the field is this little number, programmed for them by Canadian programmers, Park Place (of John Madden/EA Hockey fame), and endorsed by the Manchester United winger, Ryan Giggs. It takes the form of a pseudo-World Cup competition between 24 international teams, very roughly based on their real-life counterparts. So the Germans are poised for world domination, while the 'Great Britain' team (which should really be the England team) aren't really up to much - the programmers obviously set up all the team statistics in the midst of the Graham-Taylor-Is-Crap crisis.

Common view

The game takes the scrolling grandstand view of the action, with you controlling one of your lads at a time. Slide tackles, shots and passes are all a button-press away, along with newer moves such as jinking to dodge defenders and putting on a burst of speed to outrun the defence. Naturally, there's a player radar on screen, so you can tell whether the keeper should boot the ball straight up the centre or lob it off to the wing, and there's an instant replay function which lets you run through those impressive saves and see all the frames of animation on the detailed player sprites.

There's nothing very new here, but will the touch of 'The Giggster' bring football fortune to this title? We'll be taking the game out on the field for a good kickabout next month, so join us after the break.

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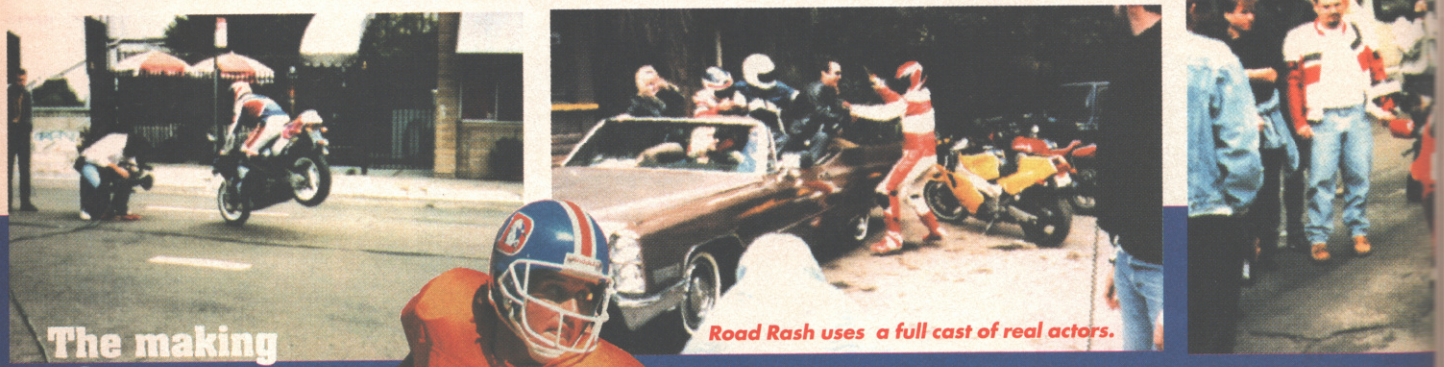
EA's 32-bit

Electronic Arts is one of the major players in the international software market, so who better to get support the Real 3DO Multiplayer. We take an exclusive look at the 32-bit wonders, from John Madden to Theme Park, coming your way soon...



Road Rash uses a full cast of real actors.

The making of a game – lights, camera, action; luvvie

The new generation of interactive games can soak up some of the biggest budgets. Many of the games EA is working on use expensive movie production techniques, and so the company is currently investing heavily in this area.

For Road Rash, EA had to bring in professional stunt directors to choreograph the crashes, which were then filmed and incorporated in the game. While in Shock Wave, actors had to be filmed against blue backgrounds, scanned into a development machine then dropped in against computer-generated backgrounds. Once you filter out the computer graphics, the FMV sections in these games work out as one long series of special effects. That kind of stuff doesn't come cheap.

'Offering real life in a box'. That's Electronic Arts' way of introducing the 3DO, the 'wonder' machine they're pouring so much time and money into. It started with their founder, Trip Hawkins, forming The 3DO Company in 1990; in pulling together giants in the media and electronics industry, Hawkins vision was to establish a universal hardware platform, reflecting the success of one of its partners, Matsushita, in pioneering the acceptance of VHS in the film industry.

Software counts

Four years later, and the hardware is with us in the shape of the 3DO Real Multiplayer. But 'software sells machines', so where are the discs? Well, there may not be much on the shelves, but the figures on paper look good. Currently there over 219 titles being developed among some 500 3DO developers worldwide. That alone should signify healthy competition and so, better standards. Yet, most people will be looking closely at what EA has to offer.

EA has over 10 years of software experience, and if they can't get it right the future's not going to look healthy for 3DO. As EA's European Marketing Manager David Wilson points out: "There's been a lot of people misinformed about 3DO. There's no way it could have lived up to its media hype, but now it's time to get some real games out there."

This year alone, EA is estimating to release an ambitious 35 3DO titles with its affiliated label partners. Hopefully, we'll see some top games in there, which is essential if 3DO is to compete in a market which will soon be seeing the likes of the Jaguar, Saturn and Sony Playstation-X. In fact, the Jaguar's delayed UK launch has come as good news for the 3DO. Ear to the ground, EA's David clarifies the advantage of 3DO over other consoles: "It's likely that by the end of the year there are going to be four different 3DO machines on the market, offering choice and price preference with full compatibility with each other."

First and last?

EA accepts 3DO is the first of its kind, and when you're as successful as EA, the industry takes you seriously. The 3DO is not dead, and with rumours going round of a potential 3DO deal with Capcom, plus a big price drop, this isn't something you can write off.

It's early days for 3DO, and if the software situation picks up things will be looking very rosy. As Hugh Martin, Chief Operating Officer at 3DO explains: "Never in history have so many companies committed to developing software for a platform in this early stage of its consumer availability." But then again, quantity doesn't necessarily mean quality. Watch this space.

preview

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL

Possibly the strongest sports title on the 3DO, this new version benefits from exceptional digitised graphics. There are different weather conditions to contend with which effect the play and there's lots of attention to detail; like the colour of the sky changing to indicate the state of approaching weather. In replay mode you can now take control of the cameras and zoom about or even lock on to a specific player to follow his tactics.

There are will be over 100 plays to choose from and 1,300 plus player ratings. To brush up on your opponents there are over 100 video clips from the 36 NFL teams in the game, which should be enough to keep every NFL nut happy.

While you play you get a useful running commentary from Madden

Trip

EA&3DO

Road Rash on 3DO features plenty of character details. There are eight riders, and a lot of them are female.

Real stunt men were used in Road Rash.

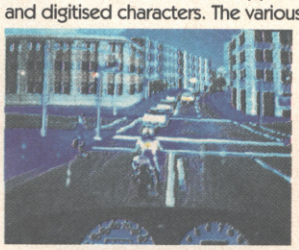
himself, and the animation of the teams on field is top notch with no slow down. Atmospheric, playable and almost certain to be a smash.

TOP: Lots of detailed action in this 3DO version, using digitised characters.
BOTTOM: You can also control the camera views.

preview

ROAD RASH

While this follows the same format as its Sega cousin, the 3DO version has been totally redone to include texture-mapped roadsides and digitised characters. The various courses



are now crammed with smoothly updating hills and the feeling of speed is excellent. New to this version is the function to switch weapons while you race, and you can also take time out of racing to play chicken with pedestrians. Basically there's a lot more to do, see and avoid.

It's not clear yet if you're going to get any more weapons beyond your club and chain, and EA is considering dropping the on-screen dashboard. The action is very fast however, and the racing aspect is now more challenging.

EA has also signed a deal with A&M records to use music from a selection of six

indie bands in the game, whose videos will also be included on the disk at no extra cost to you. Woo.

All the characters offer different approaches to the gameplay. You make selections before the race. Shiny, happy-looking people aren't they?

EA's 32-bit Trip

Build a ride and then climb in!

preview
THEME PARK

Enter the Theme Park and take control of its management and design in this strategy-based game. You compete against the world's top 40 amusement parks, who'll try and buy you out at every stage of the game, especially when you're doing well. And only you can stop them by buying up your own shares and creating the world's greatest park.

There will be plenty of tricky decisions to make, like selecting the sort of shops you want in your park; if for example you put a hot dog stand near a roller-coaster people will eat before the ride and get sick, which will damage public relations. You get the idea.

Not only do you get to build the rides in the 3DO version, you also get to try them out. So you can build the world's most improbably large roller coaster just for yourself. Of all the 3DO games we've seen, this promises to have the most depth. Still, this is also coming out on 16-bit machines, so it's hardly at the cutting edge of the new technology.

One of the few games to offer real death and strategy in its gameplay. You really have to think to play Theme Park.

preview
FIFA

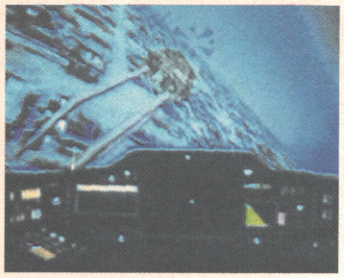
This is a very, very early version of the game. So early, in fact, that it uses the player sprites from the Mega Drive version, not the neat digitised players that will appear in the finished item. Even so, it still looks blindingly good.

Gameplay wise it's just like the Mega Drive version, but on the 3DO you get control the cameras too. So, you can play from any angle, zoom in and out, and actually take the perspective down between the players to get a view from behind them. Theoretically, you'll be able to follow the player with the ball as he dashes for the goal. Given this, you get an incredible sensation of space on the field, it's a bit like watching the game from the referee's viewpoint – one who isn't blind though.

Another nice touch is the addition of the players' shadows which actually animate and reposition depending on where your view point is. Highly realistic and the best shadow effects in any sports game to date. As could this turn out to be the best American football game anywhere, until the almost inevitable Madden's 95, of course...

FIFA on the 3DO is sooo smooth.

The players have been fully digitised



preview
SHOCKWAVE: INVASION EARTH 2019

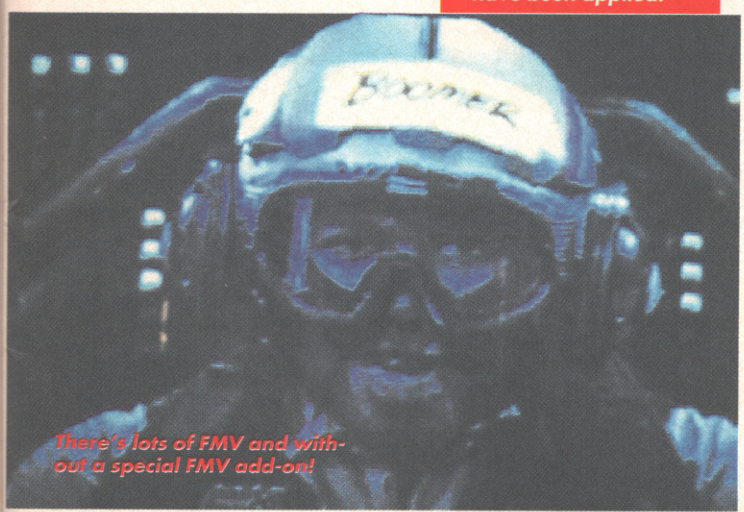
This is EA's first big-budget interactive movie. It's a science-fiction tale of alien invaders descending on Earth, while plucky young heroes such as yourself are all that stand between freedom and earthlings becoming an extra terrestrial's main course.

The multitude of missions have you engaging in air-to-air and air-to-ground combat as you fend off the alien armada. There are loads of superb Cine-Packed film sequences and you're kept up to date on the situation by the Global News Network.

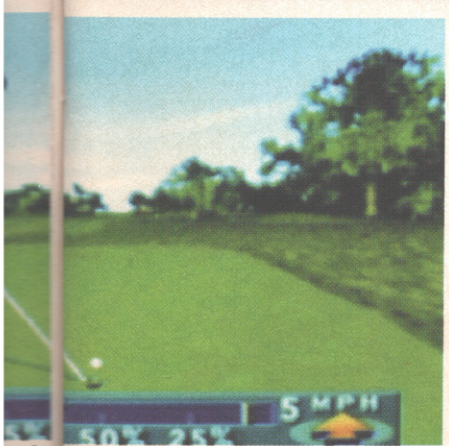
The version we played only had one finished level, and that only contained straight shoot-'em-up action. Textures have been applied to the scenery to gradually introduce changes in the terrain. So sea melts into land, then on into mountains. cities and even pyramids as you zoom across the numerous countries.

Your ship is outfitted with ultra-responsive lasers which make blasting baddies satisfying. The seek and destroy gameplay works better than you might expect, especially when you take the game's speed into account. Excellent Dolby Surround Sound caps off what is a very promising game.

Extra real textures have been applied.



There's lots of FMV and without a special FMV add-on!



ith detailed and complex animation.

preview
PGA TOUR GOLF

This classic title is set to be the most engrossing golf game yet. FMV graphics have been used for the golfers with realistic animation and overwhelming detail. Expect a better control interface as well as more speciality shots. Four courses have been digitised in 24-bit colour and plenty of shadows and backlighting have been included.

You'll be teeing off against 60 pros, all digitised and there's even a blurred effect on graphics in the distance. And best of all is that you get a round ball, not the blocky thing you smack around in other versions.

preview
TWISTED

EA's attempt at a comedy actually comes off rather well. Twisted is basically a gameshow with up to four human contestants, where the action's set on a spiral staircase with each step being a puzzle or dangerous hazard.

The show's host rattles on throughout and there are plenty of neat visual gags. As well as beating the show, there are eight computer contestants out to thwart you and grab your prizes. When you land on a challenge square, one of the opponents will select your task which is usually the hardest one. Still, you can get your own back when you choose their challenge. The puzzles however, are very simple like matching up pictures, zapping commercials and slide-square jigsaws, so you don't have to have a brain the size of a beachball to play it.

Of all the EA stuff, Twisted offers the best quality FMV and sound, as well as some impressive hardware effects.

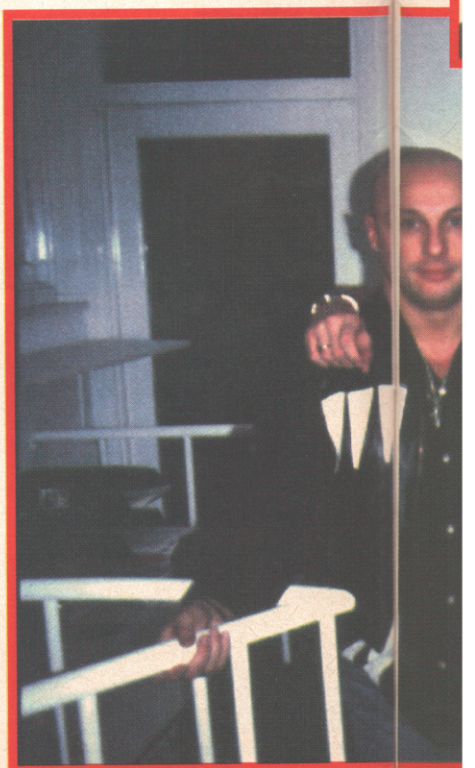
Played as a gameshow this is really full of abstract humour. Puzzles are a bit on the simple side though.

WORD UP WITH PAUL RAND

Last month it was the monopolies commission, this month it's certificates and censorship. If anything, all the recent media attention only goes to prove how large the computer industry really is. But now the issue isn't price, it's preventing you from buying games.

If you've already flicked through the news section, you'll see that a set of movie-type certificates are being imposed on new games. Anyone over 18 can buy any games, but 17 and below will be split into three categories: 0-10 11-14 15-17. The worry for me is that some games might be treated unfairly. Mortal Kombat II, for instance, is pretty bloody, so can we expect to see a 15 certificate there? If so, it seems a bit pointless that home versions will be restricted while anyone can pop down to the arcades and play the real thing, blood 'n' all.

At the end of the day, certificates are a good thing. Games like Voyeur on CD-i aren't really suitable for younger gamesters. However, the whole certification system is voluntary, all it takes are a few of the big companies to pull out and the whole thing falls apart. Whatever happens, you can be sure of keeping up to date with the latest news by getting your copy of the galaxy's greatest games mag every month.



COMPETITION

SPOT THE SHOT!

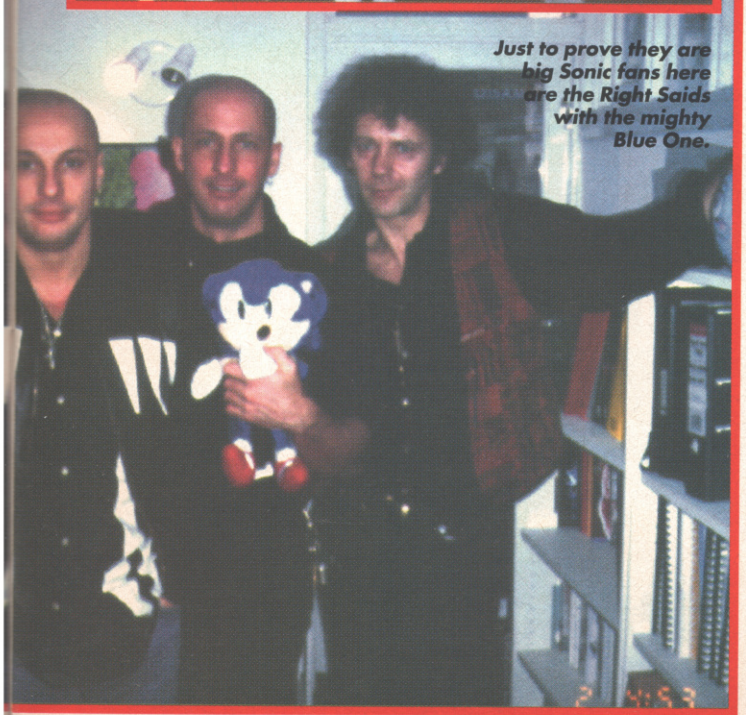
Groove on people. It's that crazy part of the magazine where you can win a game just by recognising a jumbled up game picture created on our power sucking Apple Macs. It's Spot the Shot yeah! Anyway, want to know who won Spot the Shot last month? Hold your breath no longer, the lucky person is Robert Ruck from Boston in Lincs. A Game Gear game should be blasting its way towards you as we speak. Nice one Robert.

So you think you know what game the picture's from then? Then stick your answer down on a postcard along with your name, address and the machine you own and send the whole caboodle to: Spot the Shot 149, CVG, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU. Please make sure your entry reaches us by 14 April 1994 or Rik'll eat it.

STAR WAS LATE!

That's right. Because of traffic congestion in west London, top star Deniz was late in his meeting with his pop idols Right Said Fred. Although the Freds were disappointed at having to wait so long to meet Deniz it was smiles all round as the Freds proudly displayed their new single (previously a big club hit) that's been remixed to tie-in with the new Sonic 3 Mega Drive game. Music whiz Deniz proclaimed it to be 'monster, a surefire hit!' and made sure he had two signed copies of the single before he left. One of these he's stored away safely while the other one is being worn out in the office where Deniz makes an effort to impress everyone in the office on a daily basis with his boogie skills.

Just as Deniz walked in to meet Baldy, Baldy and Ugly, he caught them reading CVG. Weird coincidence or what?



Just to prove they are big Sonic fans here are the Right Saids with the mighty Blue One.

MEET THE CVG CREW:

PAUL – Friend of the stars Rand is waiting for the film scripts to start rolling in after his recent appearance on the BBC1 national news. Rand pretended to chat about the regulations on video games but what you didn't see was his edited and rather desperate Elvis rendition in the hope that it would be seen by agents and managers nationwide.

GARY – Gaz has started something of a health kick at CVG. He's been trying to encourage everyone to drink herbal teas which have exotic names such as 'Raspberry Rendezvous' and 'Orange Dazzler' Gary's also been running to work in the mornings and insists on doing 50 press-ups before turning on his Mac. Is the pressure of sorting out Rik and Deniz's crayon scrawlings too much we wonder?

RIK – It's been a quiet month for burger munching champion Rik. Having finally moved out of his Gran's house, he's now to be found in a swank flat with ex-CVG slaves Steve Keen and Paul Anglin. Living with his Gran has obviously had an unfortunate affect on Rik since he keeps offering to make Steve and Paul cups of tea and tuck them in at night.

DENIZ – Deniz has been looking sad and miserable this month and it's had nothing to do with his hat getting shrunk in the wash. No, the problem is that he hasn't managed to blag anything. Amazing isn't it? Not even one solitary computer game has entered his stripey swag bag. Has the master lost his touch? More news as we get it.

JULIE – Burp maiden Julie continues on her never ending 'top secret mission' this month, so it's been hard to gather any information about her. The boys have been using all their journalistic skills to try and find out what's she's up to but keep getting stopped by burly minders. If you want a big clue though you could turn to page 112.

PETREA – With Julie involved on a 'top secret mission' Petrea's tasted power this month. She's been in charge of the gaggle of freelance designers who've been trying to keep things flowing smoothly on the design front. Rumours of her eyes glowing red while wielding a whip and laughing maniacally are strongly denied.

STEVE – Like Gary, Steve's clearly aiming towards starring in his own fitness video. After a marine issue crew-cut he's now turned his attention to eating salads and other frighteningly healthy foods. And he's done all this despite the best attempts of the CVG crew, wafting his beloved pasties in front of him at every opportunity.

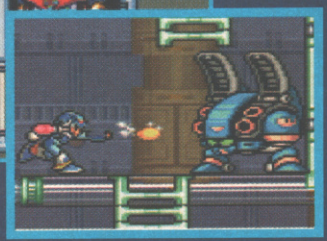
REVIEW

SNES ▶ by CAPCOM ▶ £55

Out now. Contact Machine Shack (081-769 6401) for information.

MEGA MAN X

Eight years down the line, and Capcom's original flagship character finally makes it to the SNES. Is this 16-bit revamp any good then?



You can start on any of the eight levels in this game. When you defeat a boss you get their weapons.

Originally a NES game in 1987, Mega Man (or Rockman as he's known in Japan) was followed closely by eight sequels, occasionally delving into Game Boy territory too.

For his SNES debut Mega Man is again offering more of his well-thought through platform action. Here in fact it spans across eight levels with some incredibly smart graphics and adventurous platform layouts, reminiscent of the coin-op classic Bionic Commandos. Elements from earlier Mega Man games have been include, like acquiring the weapons and powers off each of the bosses.

Looks can kill

So there you are with a broad selection of weapons, but unlike some games, it's not just a case of picking the best looking shooter and sticking with it for the remainder. Each weapon has its own particular use, and there's sufficient difference between what's available to make making the right selection an intricate part of the game. All your weapons are also capable of being charged up to intensify the damage they cause.

HAVEN'T WE MET BEFORE?

Before Streetfighter had even been thought of by Capcom, Mega Man was its flagship tile. So when the first game appeared (surprisingly titled Mega Man) back in the late Eighties on the NES its phenomenal sales ensured a hefty flow of cash for future sequels and merchandise like sweets and toys. Since then there have been nine more games in fact, making it one of the longest running game sagas ever. Here's the catalogue:

1987	-	*Mega Man*	-	*NES*
1989	-	*Mega Man 2*	-	*NES*
1990	-	*Mega Man 3*	-	*NES*
1991		*Mega Man: Willey's Revenge*		*NES*
1992	-	*Mega Man 2*	-	*GB*
1993	-	*Mega Man 3*	-	*GB*
	-	*Mega Man 5*	-	*NES*
1994	-	*Mega Man 4*	-	*GB*
	-	*Mega Man 6*	-	*NES*
	-	*MEGA MAN X*	-	*SNES*

VERDICT

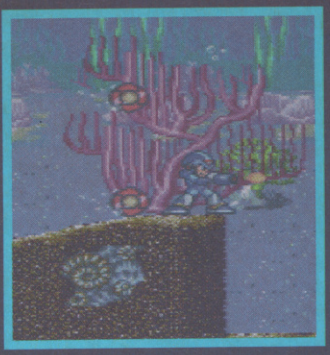
This is not just another platform shoot-'em-up. Oh no, the graphics are well structured, practical and good looking. Your power-ups are varied and you'll find weapons from one stage useful in another. Mega Man's main drawback though is lastability, which isn't helped by a password system which remembers your weapons and order of stages visited, plus you can start on any stage... These gripes aside though, Mega Man X is lavish and cunning while it lasts, and well balanced throughout.

DENIZ AHMET

VERDICT

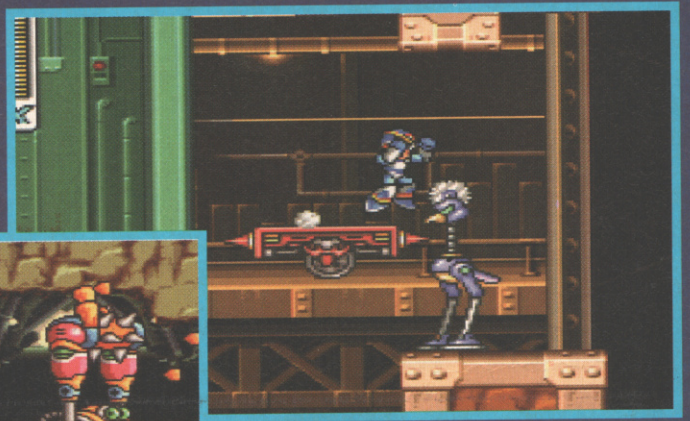
I've nothing against platform shoot-'em-ups, but I'm more than a little disappointed with this. There aren't that many original features, especially when you compare it to Super Contra, and Gunstar Heroes on the Mega Drive. I particularly despise the way you can play any level right from the start. What's the point? There's nothing to look forward to if you can see every level at the touch of a button. I don't want to take anything away from what is a decent platformer, it's just that there's not much lasting appeal.

RIK SKEWS



Shoot aliens as soon as you see them or they will suddenly charge at you, leaving you no chance to attack effectively.

The problem is that Mega Man's eight levels really don't present much of a challenge. None are larger than the usual platform game length, and more to the point, most are fairly straight forward. There are tactics to be learned like going back over easier stages to recharge energy and weapons, but you can start on any level and play in a non-linear fashion, which doesn't give you an incentive to play on. Obviously, this destroys the graphical pull of the game because you can see it all at the out set.



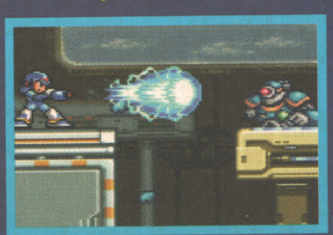
Never stay on a moving ramp for very long because it will run out of track. Always shoot when you jump off too, then you'll avoid dangers like this.

Fresh faced

Mega Man X retains your attention because it's lovingly crafted with real challenges and no silly stuff like having to re-kill baddies you've already disposed of. It's also fresh to see power-ups which can alter your approach to a level. For example, one stage may have you doing the usual awkward negotiation of platforms, but load-up in the prof's capsule and you can dash and leap through at ground level, which will allow you to avoid many dangers and collect a nice bonus from left over time units. Nicely done.

Never walk into a baddies with a spikey ball or this will happen. Use fully charged weapons against these opponents.

Visually very smart, but this level is repetitive in structure.

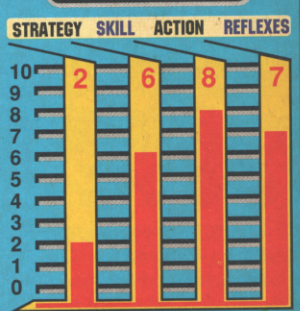


Any weapon can be charged up – R-Type style.

SNES

PROS: Great graphics and well thought out levels and weapons.
CONS: Fairly straightforward and lacks an incentive to carry on.

GRAPHICS	Some nice parallax effects and great animated sprites with detail.	89%
SOUND	A bit shallow and lightweight given the action, but not annoying.	75%
GAMEPLAY	It's what you look for. Tense, dramatic and heaps of hectic fun.	90%
VALUE	Eight levels isn't a major challenge, but they're crammed full.	80%



MISS OK HIT

85

REVIEW

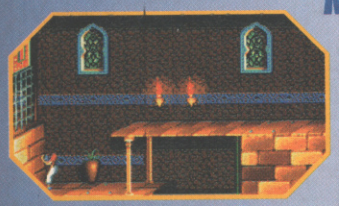
MEGA DRIVE | by DOMARK | £39.99

Out March. Contact Domark (081 780 2224) for information.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

The original gore game comes to the Mega Drive in a splat of excitement

Here's a scene from the introduction which tells you the plot and save having to read the manual.



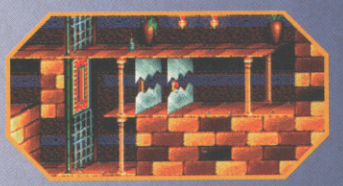
That gate is obviously locked. Look for a loose floor slab to open it up.

Prince of Persia was one of the most successful cross-format conversions ever. The SNES was the best of the bunch, but this Mega Drive version is just as detailed, minus some colour and sound.

complex puzzles in search of his princess imprisoned in the tower. Prince of Persia pioneered the technique of 'human' animation which has since been used in games like Flashback, and this is still the best use of the technique, given that the levels are about as platform-based as you could possibly get.

As such, each screen is a mini puzzle with the challenge being to get from one side to the other. Such puzzles essentially take the form of stunts, for which you'll have to climb, leap, avoid loose floor slabs, hang from ledges, tip-toe past touch sensitive hidden spikes, crawl under gates and even fight your own reflection.

Dealing with new dangers, and discovering some really gruesome ways to die is focal to Prince of Persia's appeal. The gnashing metal jaws for example will split your body in half with puddles of blood. You also fight with the Sultan's guards and skeletons, who gradually gain intelligence and will chase you.



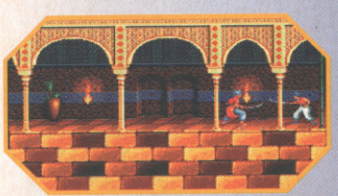
You can jump through both blades, but it's safer to tip-toe.

It's best not to run onto a new screen or this can happen!

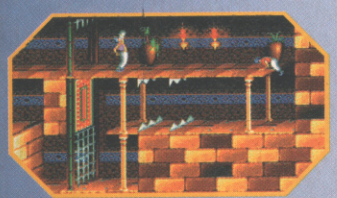
Matrimony

Your quest is to rescue the princess before the Sultan takes her hand in marriage, and so, the time limit is central to the gameplay. Prince starts off in the dungeons and has to negotiate his way up through 20 stages of

The challenge is to make it through the 20 levels which take you to this palace. The clock is ticking and the princess awaits.



The sword fighting scenes are well done, and baddies gradually get more intelligent.



Potions replenish energy and give special powers. Some will also kill you. Learn by colour.

Sometimes guards chase you through different screens. You can also lure them into traps.

VERDICT

This plays just like any other incarnation of the game, and fortunately Prince of Persia has always been a top game. While the rather slow paced progression won't appeal to everyone, it will captivate some players since it's a totally engrossing experience that is both highly realistic and tense. The amount of gore is quite shocking in places and the gameplay develops with a superb difficulty curve. The only problem is that you might not realise until the last few levels that you're not going to make it in time, which means starting from the very beginning.

DENIZ AHMET

Out now. Contact Console Concepts (0782 712759) for information.

Super Pinball

Not many games use the SNES' hi-resolution mode, but Super Pinball does, and to great effect. But how does it play?

Of all the pinball games across all formats, why has no-one considered a method of allowing players to hit the ball with varying degrees of strength. Now don't build your hopes up because no, Super Pinball doesn't have such a facility, but it does have amazing graphics, with a perspective which feels highly realistic if a tab detached. Add to this the fact that the ball behaves like it should under the laws of physics and rarely drops straight down between the flippers and you have a fun and realistic pinball sim.

Tickled pink

Saying that though, It's a shame that more thought hasn't gone into what's on the three tables. The ball really doesn't have much in its path, and there are few desirable bonus spots to aim for. Also, there isn't anything specific to each table as most of the bonus-type effects are the same whatever table you're on.

You'll also find that there's never more than one set of flippers either, which is a bit old fashioned. A tilt option is to be found however, and repeated use will sound the alarm and disable the flippers till you lose your ball, so do be careful. Each session will support up to four players and that really is the way to play pinball because hi-scores is what the challenge is about.

VERDICT

This is one of the most attractive looking SNES games around. Shame that it only offers a simple version of pinball. There are only three tables and there are no options to configure their angle or number of balls for example. More over, there is actually little happening on each table, with few surprises to target. The realistic perspective allows the whole table to fit on a single screen so there's no scrolling during play. However, it can be difficult to spot the ball sometimes. Um, Jaki Crush Pinball is still the best on the SNES.

DENIZ AHMET

Unfortunately, there isn't much for the ball to hit on each table which makes it boring.

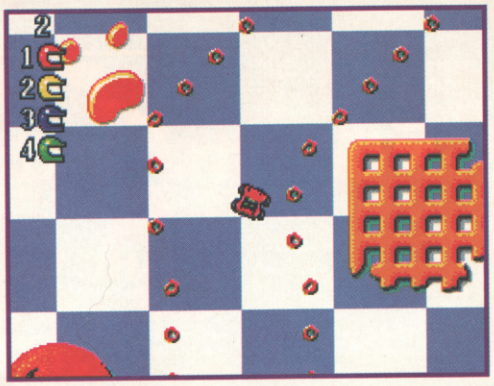
The entire table fits on one screen so there's no scrolling!

Hi-res graphics provide an immediate pull. Shame there's only three tables to play on.

REVIEW | PC | by CODEMASTERS | £29.99

Micro Machines

Frantic desktop racing or another bad PC conversion? Time to regress back to your childhood...



The breakfast table is fraught with danger. Nip past the oranges, leap over the Cheerios and nimbly dodge the marmalade dollops.

losing malarkey.

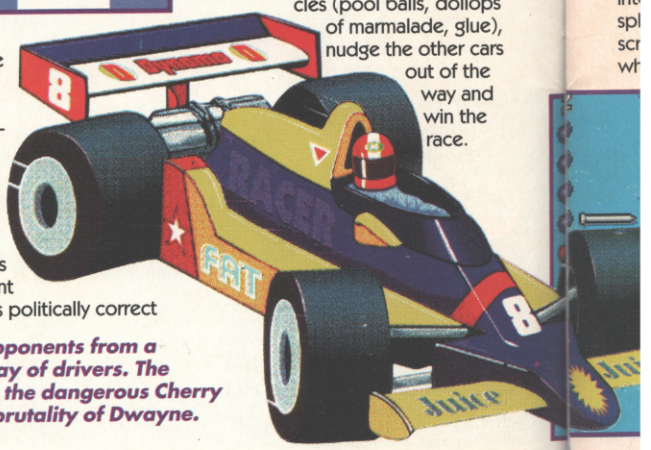
Nudge, nudge.

In one player mode you can race against a single opponent or battle it out against three others in the race challenge. The multi-opponent race is straightforward - simply charge around the track, dodge the obstacles (pool balls, dollops of marmalade, glue), nudge the other cars out of the way and win the race.

Micro Machines features a wide variety of vehicles. Here I'm slamming around a sink in a dinky little powerboat.

After six months in the pits, Micro Machines has finally made it off the mark and on to PC. If you've never played the game before, it's based on those dinky little cars, trucks, tanks etc that you raced round your living room floor when you were wee. In either one or two-player mode you must race round a number of different tracks, ranging from a pool table to a kiddies' sandpit. Er, and that's it. Winning is the most important thing, none of this politically correct

Choose your opponents from a frightening array of drivers. The mighty Walter, the dangerous Cherry and the lethal brutality of Dwayne. Scary huh?



REVIEW | PC | by ACCOLADE | £44.99

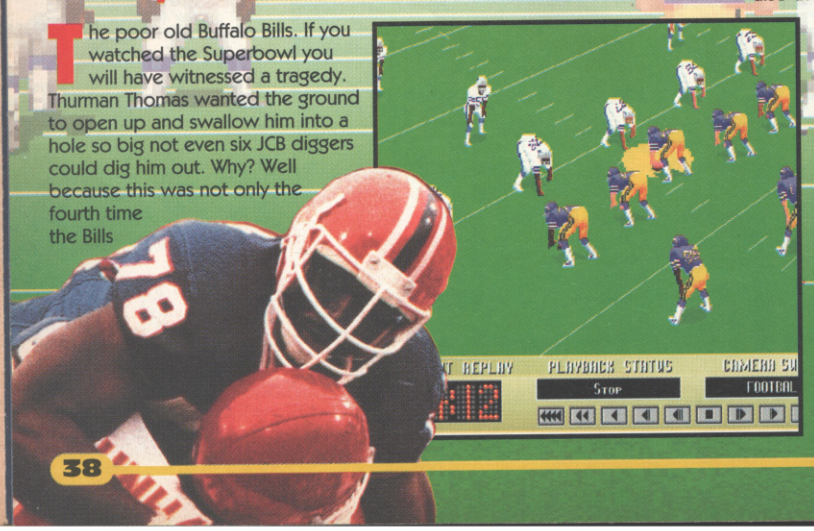
UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS

42, 29, 38, HUT, HUT, HUT. Once again America's favourite sport has muscled its way over the Atlantic. First Down!

OH WHAT A LOVELY VIEW

Like most American football games on the shelves these days, Unnecessary Roughness (which takes its name from a personal foul) boasts a wealth, in fact an absolute plethora of game views. Pressing the keys 1-9 you can view your NFL team from a variety of viewpoints ranging from the normal 'behind the team view' to a quarterback view and a distant 'blimp view'. These are all very pretty in SVGA (especially the far-off views) but do tend to get a bit blocky when viewed close up. Of course you can also rotate the pitch 360 degrees, zoom in, zoom out and tilt the view up and down.

The poor old Buffalo Bills. If you watched the Superbowl you will have witnessed a tragedy. Thurman Thomas wanted the ground to open up and swallow him into a hole so big not even six JCB diggers could dig him out. Why? Well because this was not only the fourth time the Bills had reached the Superbowl but also the fourth time they had lost it. And this time it was Thurman's fault.



And he's wide open. Surely no-one can stop him now, just a quick 65 yard dash to the end zone.

Tell us about the game will ya!

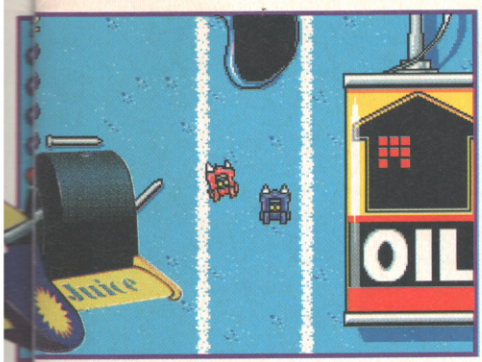
What's this got to do with the review? Well nothing apart from that it's about gridiron, and so is this game.

Choosing the plays is a simple matter of flicking through the pages of the playbook and pushing the joystick to select the play.

In the head-to-head game, simply drive off the screen and hey presto a bonus! Gimme a point.

It's better with 2

In two player mode the game comes into its own. Instead of opting for split-screen action, the action is full screen. Each player has four points which he/she must increase by driving off the screen or by knocking the other car off the track. If red gains a point, blue loses one and vice versa. The game is won when one player gains all eight points or if after the three laps you have more points than your opponent. If the points are equal, the game goes into sudden death and whoever claims the next point wins the game.



In the garage you've got to power around avoiding nails, screws, oil and glue.

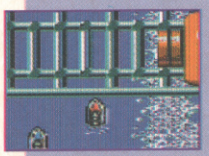
VERDICT

I loved Micro Machines on Amiga and well, it's a shame the PC version can't match it. I've been looking forward to this for some time but the scrolling is jerky, the sound is sub-standard and the whole shebang is so slow it's like the cars are driving through treacle – which would be excusable on the Kitchen table track, but this is the case throughout. If you're a Micro Machines fan you're going to be disappointed. Another bugbear is that the PC isn't a good two-player machine. Get a joystick splitter cable and it improves, but not by much.

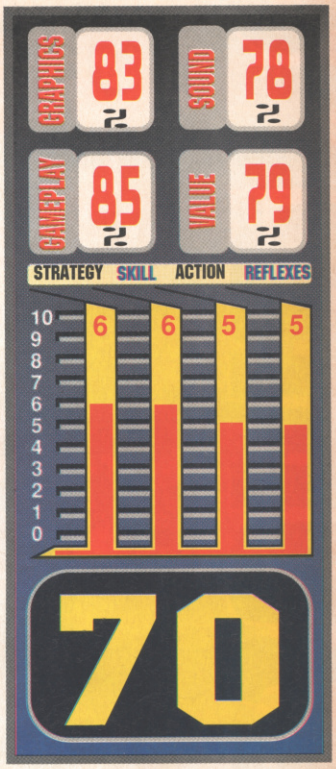
GARY LORD

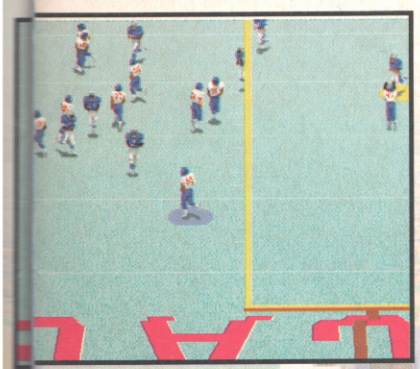
SWAP MY PC FOR 2 GAME GEARS, NOT ME

Well actually I would because Micro Machines on the Sega handheld is better than this version. This is the fourth sub-standard conversion I have seen in the past four months. Sensi Soccer was a pale imitation, Alien Breed suffered from more bugs than a Royal telephone call and Streetfighter II was a big pile of poo. Sadly Micro Machines isn't stunning either.



Out now. Contact Codemasters (0926 814132) for information.





Just when you thought you were getting good, God throws deep snow and icy winds at you. Try having a running game now...

If you're feeling really ambitious try playing from the Quarterback angle, a brilliant viewpoint but tactically stupid.

VERDICT

I've got mixed views about Unnecessary Roughness. On the one hand it gets a big thumbs up for having SVGA and all the correct player names, but on the other I find it is just too damned easy. Like Mike Ditka's Ultimate Football before it, this game has one long offensive play that can regularly notch up 40-50 yard gains. It works every single time and against any team. In contrast I'm still playing Coaches Club Football and on the hard level I still haven't managed to beat it.

PAUL RAND

Accolade's Unnecessary Roughness follows MicroProse's Coaches Club Football. In full SVGA glory, you can pick your favourite team, design your own plays, and rush, pass, tackle and go 'hrrrumph' as your players are hit by bigger and tougher opponents.

The major difference in this football sim, though, is in the graphics and the digitised speech, with the voice of commentator Al Michaels talking you through the action after every play.

Ouch! How about some aspirin?

Like Coaches Club and FPS Pro Football, Unnecessary Roughness also has comprehensive play and league-design options and Accolade has crammed in everything the grid-iron fan could ask for, but at the end of the match it's just another US football game.

Out now. Contact Accolade (081-877 0880) for information.

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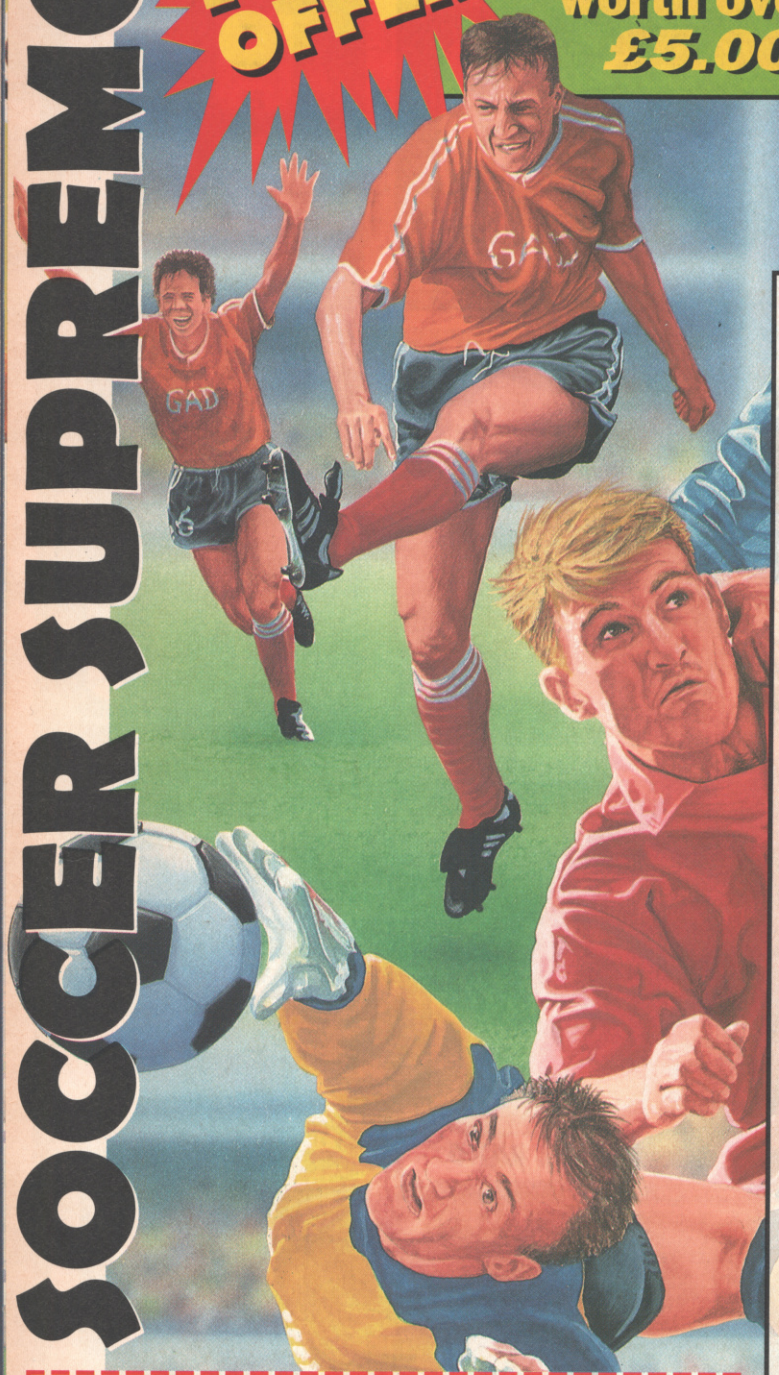

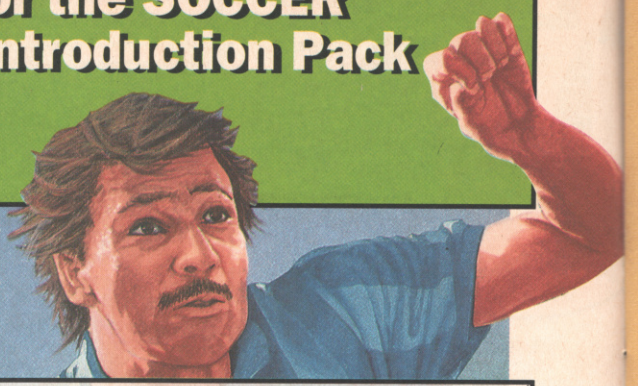

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CVG April '94

REVIEW

MEGA DRIVE | by SEGA | £44.99

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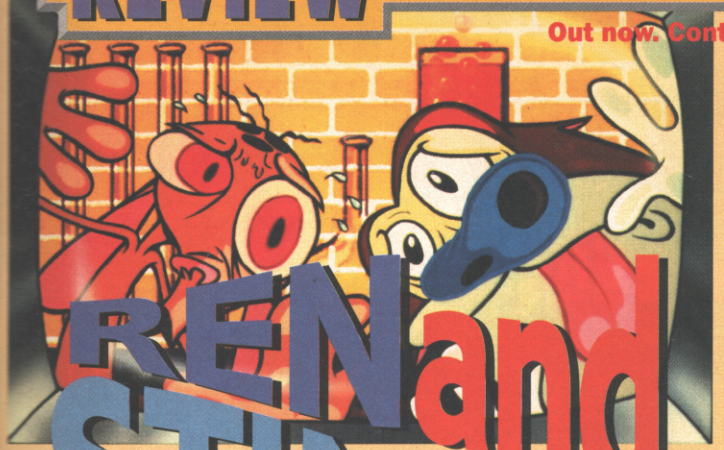
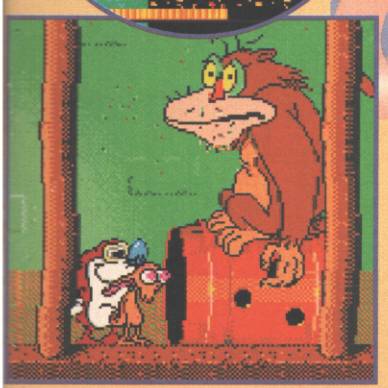


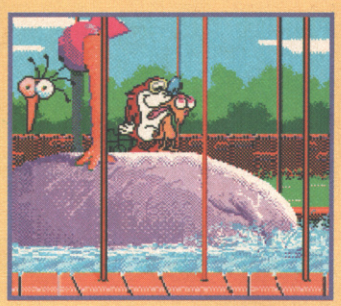
REN and STIMPY

They're weird, but are they wonderful, and can they make you happy, happy?

Ren & Stimpy are the latest pretenders to the weird cartoon throne. Although fairly unknown in Britain, they're huge in the States, hence they've turned up in their own game. Unfortunately the game's plot isn't as weird and wacky as the programme's: Stimpy (the cat) has invented a machine which turns garbage into grub. But greed rears its ugly head and Stimpy forces the machine to convert too much rubbish, and it explodes and scatters all over the town, so Ren (the chihuahua) and Stimpy must track down the pieces, put them back together and live happily ever after. Or something.



Slap this monkey to stop him throwing energy sapping bananas at you.

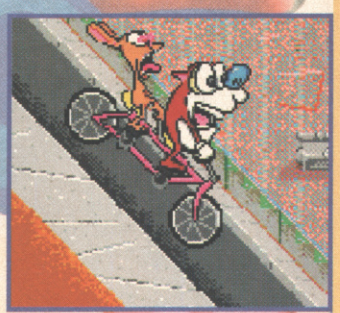


These hippos are a right pain to get past. They either submerge under the water or open their mouths and knock you off.

Ren & Stimpy is packed with variety. Just when you were getting bored with standard platform action this fast scrolling chase sequence appears.

Joy, joy!

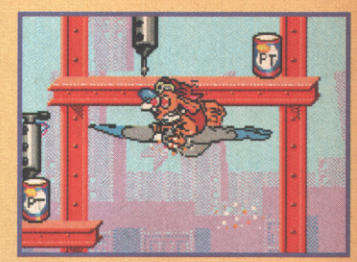
Although you can play the game with a friend, even in one player mode you control both characters, with one leading while the other is used for special moves. It's easier in one-player mode since you don't have to spend half-an-hour coordinating your moves with a friend.



The speed on this downhill section is excellent and on par with anything seen in the Sonic games.

Cheerful, cheerful!

This isn't your run-of-the-mill platform game though. There's stacks of variety here. Just when you think you've conquered a level up pops a surprise. For instance, on the zoo level there's a 'float-'em-up' section where Ren & Stimpy are inflated with an air pump and get around by blowing air out from their... well I think you can guess which orifice we're talking about. And on the outside level it's bike time, only it can fly – Ren powers the bike with bellows while Stimpy steers. Yes it is as unsafe as it sounds. ●

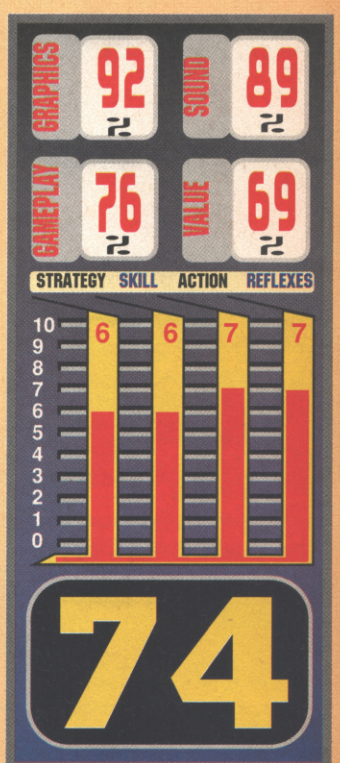


The powdered toastman will rescue you if you fall off the screen, though it'll cost you.

VERDICT

Initially Ren & Stimpy scores highly. The graphics are detailed; there's heaps of variety; lovely parallax effects; wonderful sound and the wacky tunes complement the action perfectly. Gameplay is initially strong as there's little standard platform action and lots of new ideas. Unfortunately though, first impressions wear off. The game is too easy, primarily because there's little going on on-screen. A shame really because with the amount of original ideas here Ren & Stimpy deserves to be a classic, sadly it isn't.

RIK SKEWS



Out now. Contact Accolade (081-877 0880) for information.

BARKLEY
Shut up and JAM

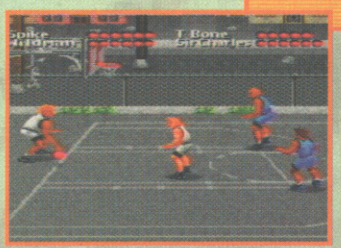
Playing basketball without a referee may sound like a heap of fun, but does Barkley offer sufficient scope for bad behaviour?

The backgrounds are quite pleasing but the action on court is a bit dull by comparison.

There are no rules on court so you can punch opponents to the ground. The computer opponents do it all the time which is annoying.

These fancy moves look nice, but they often seem to have a few animation frames missing. Some are also tricky to perform and it's difficult to judge their working distances.

There are a variety of 'dunks' possible. Like NBA JAM, you have a power bar to activate variations.



If you have a four-player adaptor then the game is much more fun and playable.

Acclaim's NBA JAM (last issue) has already set the standard for other basketball games to follow. So when something like Barkley comes along so soon afterwards to challenge it you wonder if it's a rushed job.

Shut up and tell us about the game

For a start, the game is slower on the move, and the animation appears to have the odd frame missing when it comes to slamming home the ball.

There are 16 players to choose from, each of which has their own strenghts and abilities and methods of slamming home the ball, but you can't edit them to your liking.

Like NBA JAM there is a power meter which you activate to enable you to run faster, jump higher or initiate super dunks. Obviously this wears out after a while, but you can regenerate your power by shooting a three point basket.

Four's more fun

The game does provide full support for four player adaptors and this obviously makes it more challenging. However, the main thing in Barkley's favour is that there are no refs, so anything goes on the pitch, subsequently you can punch and kick your opponents to the ground and steal their ball. It certainly makes a change from normal hands off basketball. ●

Left: Make it to the end and you get to play in front of a crowd.

VERDICT

If Barkley arrived before Acclaim's NBA JAM there would be a reason to buy it. However, it hasn't and NBA is the better game. In Barkley the animation is slower and you occasionally have to wait for the screen to scroll and show you where the ball has landed. This is clumsy, but basically the promise of a more fun game thanks to the lack of real sport rules hasn't been lived up to. Yes, it's got fancy moves like NBA, but it's difficult to get a chance to use these since your opponents are always knocking you to the ground.

DENIZ AHMET

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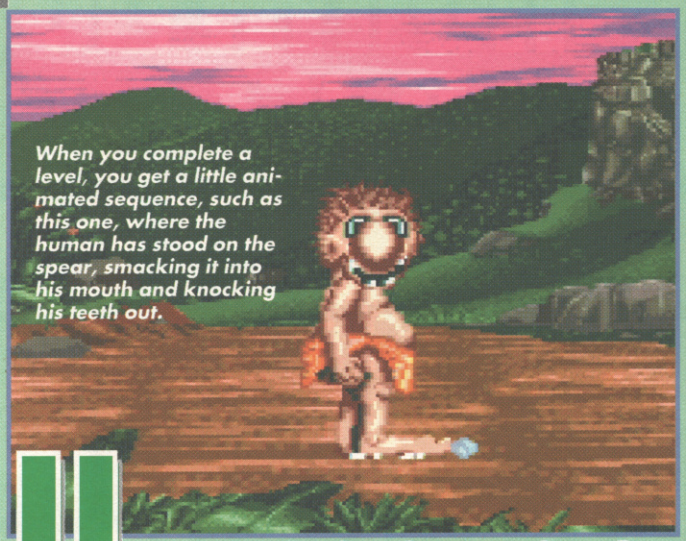
REVIEW

SNES | by GAMETEK | £44.99

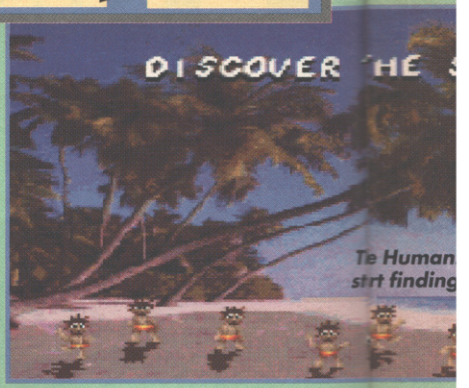
Crazy cavemen come to life on your Super Nintendo!

Lemmings was one of the most popular puzzle games ever, combining tricky problems with fast gameplay. Many companies have attempted to copy its formula, one of them being Mirage, the firm currently producing the graphically stunning beat-'em-up Rise of The Robots. The rights for Mirage's first release, Humans on the Amiga, have been



When you complete a level, you get a little animated sequence, such as this one, where the human has stood on the spear, smacking it into his mouth and knocking his teeth out.

Humans



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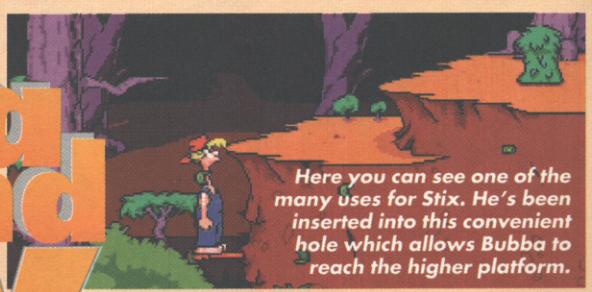
REVIEW

MEGA DRIVE | by CORE DESIGN | £44.99

Bubba and STIX

Bubba and Stix get on the conversion bus and take an enjoyable trip to Mega Drive land



Here you can see one of the many uses for Stix. He's been inserted into this convenient hole which allows Bubba to reach the higher platform.

Hmm... Bubba can't jump that high, so how's he going to get by? Perhaps that boulder holds the answer.

You'd imagine life as a delivery man would be a fairly ordinary existence and offer little surprises right? Me too, and on most occasions we'd probably be right. But for simple delivery man Bubba, things were about to take a turn out of the ordinary.

Just like that

On one of those days when it would probably have been better for Bubba to stay in bed, a spaceship on the look out for alien species

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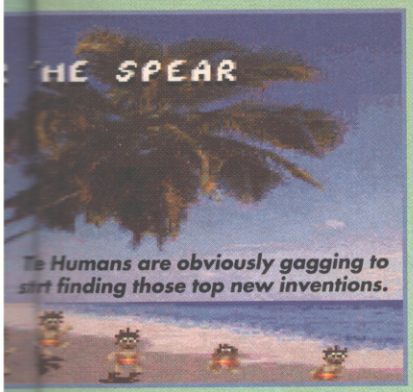


The Humans are obviously gagging to start finding those top new inventions.

snapped up by Gametek, who bring us the game on SNES.

Doug McLure

It's a simple affair, in theory. You control a tribe of cavemen who are on the road to homosapienism. It's your task to teach them how to make fire, how to throw spears, that sort of stuff. You do this by leading them through the platform-based levels (there's a surprise, eh?) to the various new inventions which can be used to complete tasks on later stages.

Climb on to your mates' shoulders to reach higher parts of the stage and various objects.

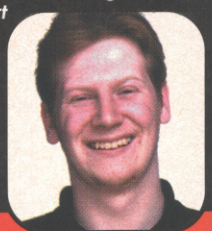
Raquel Welch

For example, finding the spear allows you not only to throw it about but also use it as a pole vault. It's not just a matter of waltzing along the platform, picking up the invention and nipping off to the next level, though. For some reason, these lads can't climb up on to ledges, so you have to climb on to the shoulders of your mates and use them as a ladder. As you only get a limited supply of cavemen per level, you have to plan your route exactly, otherwise you run out of men and have to start all over again.

They're not the sort of creatures to mess with, tyrannosaurus rexes, as an unfortunate human finds to his cost.

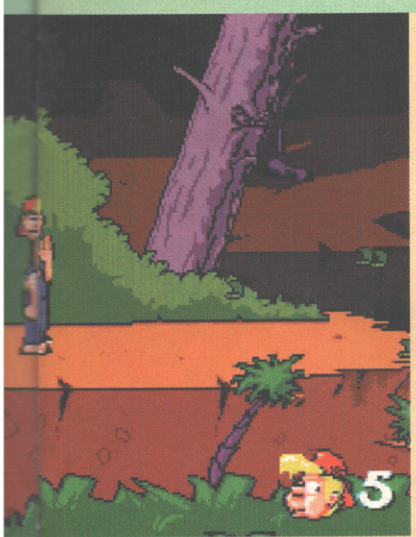
VERDICT

When Humans was on Amiga, we thought it was a jolly enough game, but it didn't really offer anything that Lemmings had not already delivered. While fun in the short term, Humans soon becomes repetitive – walk along the platform, climb on a caveman's back and grab the invention, and that's about it. If you're a puzzler fan then you might go for this game, but you'd be better off checking out Lemmings and seeing whether you can handle the fiddly controls on this format, because it is the better game.



PAUL RAND

Out now. Contact Gametek (0753 553445) for information.

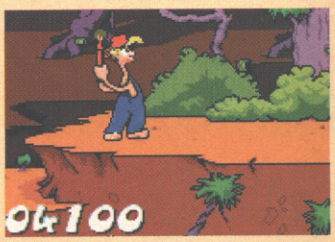


Leave Bubba alone and he'll go through all the usual expressions and also play Stix!

passed above Bubba as he was delivering some animals to the zoo. Bubba and the lorry were promptly beamed into the spacecraft. Something went wrong however, and not long after Bubba had been kidnapped he was ejected from the craft along with all the other aliens and fell to the planet below. Before he could recover Bubba was hit on the head by Stix, a stick-like creature that fell with him. Anyway, enough of that.

Tell me more

The game is a horizontally scrolling puzzle adventure which is based around Bubba's attempts to return to Earth with only Stix to help him. Apart from being used as a weapon Bubba's planky pal can also be used as a lever, a snooker cue, a tightrope balance, a javelin, a baseball bat and a platform to walk across. Although his main aim is to get back home Bubba also has to avoid being recaptured by Waldo, a rather fat alien.



Stix can be used to swipe baddies with...

VERDICT

Bar the lack of colours and the slightly inferior sound FX and music, Bubba 'n' Stix on Mega Drive is as near a conversion of the Amiga classic as you could possibly hope for. To be honest I'm not a great fan of puzzle games, but this held me captivated for ages thanks to logical puzzles, brilliant control and the sheer range of things that Stix can be made to do. The Mega Drive is lacking in decent games which require more than the movement of your index finger and as such it comes highly recommended.

RIK SKEWS

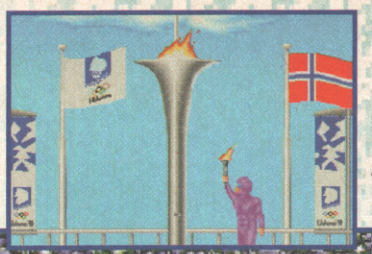
Out now. Contact Core Design (0332 297797) for information.

AMIGA | by US GOLD | £32.99

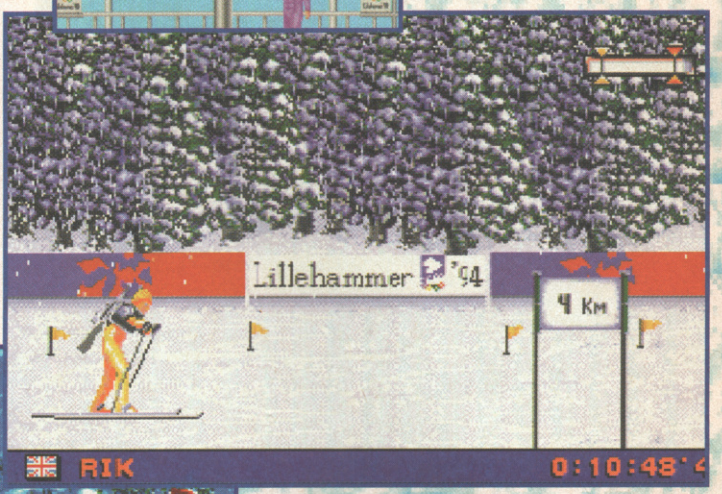
Out now. Contact US Gold (021-625 3366) for info.

Winter Olympics

It's time for a thermal joystick as US Gold gather together a collection of favourite winter sports in one wholesome Olympic collection...



Here we are at the start of the Games. Will I get a Gold Medal or get busted for taking those dodgy pills?



Here I am going for gold and remarkably there's no sign of Henry Kelly.

You want slow, tedious and very boring gameplay? Then try the downhill event on the Amiga.

As I write this people outside are seizing up and turning blue as snow tumbles down. To say it's cold would be like saying the Pope's religious. Add to this the fact that the Winter Olympics have started in Norway and it seems like the ideal time to check out US Gold's official tie-in. Winter Olympics offers you (and up to three friends in the Amiga version) the chance to compete against each other as well as, or with up to 15 computer opponents in the following chillsome events.

Cor, bit chilly!

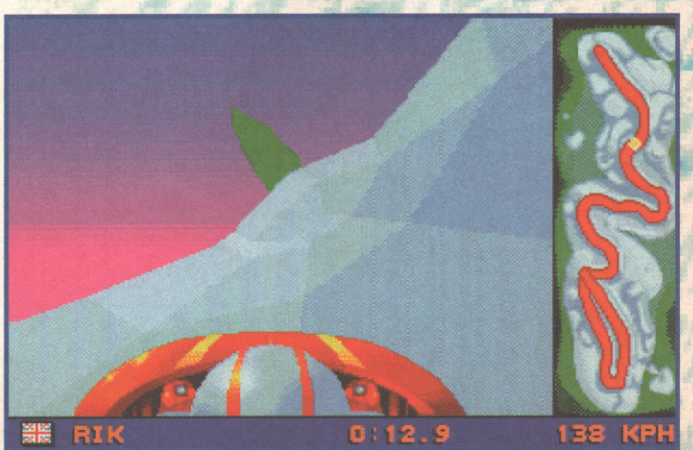
Biathlon's first, a combined sport of cross-country skiing and rifle shooting, it takes the form of a link event between the other games. The downhill event is based on one of the world's toughest downhill courses with the winner being whoever completes the course in the fastest time after one run. You can continue to complete the course, but no result will be given. Super-g is another alpine event and set on a shorter track than the downhill. Again the winner's decided after one run. On the giant slalom the winner is decided after two runs with the lowest overall time winning. Slalom's much the same, other than the victor is the competitor who has the fastest aggregate time after two runs. Last of the ski-based events is ski jumping. Two jumps are required, with points being awarded for style, technique and distance achieved.

Ooh, isn't it cold!

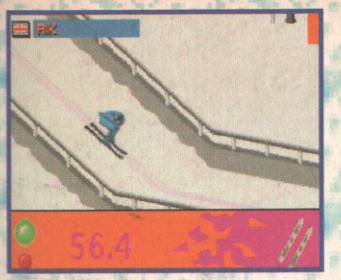
Bobsleigh next. Expect to push your competitors to 4G as you hurtle down the course's 1,365 metres. Coming in to the home straight and we greet the luge . This is where one or two people hurtle around the track bobsleigh-style in a light toboggan (unless you've got a Game Boy 'cos it's not in that version), the winner being the person who has the best aggregate time over two runs. Lastly (for Amiga owners anyway) there's short-track speed skating, where you hurtle around an icy track with a group of similarly clad skaters. The Game Boy's last event is the strangely titled freestyle moguls where you bounce off snow mounds in an artistic way for points. ●

YE OLDE OLYMPIC GAMES

The earliest recorded date given for the first Olympics is 776BC, although historians, large brains that they are, believe the games started long before then. Staged during midsummer at Olympia, the festival became a regularly scheduled event in pre-Christian Greece. They were held in honour of Zeus, the most important God in ancient Greek mythology and all wars would cease during the contests. Like an England football match it must have been rather unexciting, as records suggest the first games consisted of just one event, a 183m foot race.

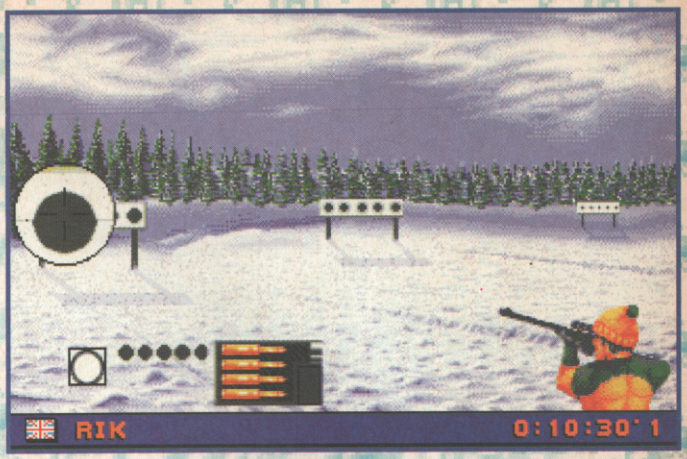


The speed and sound FX on offer in the Amiga bobsleigh event combine to make an enjoyable and highly realistic section.



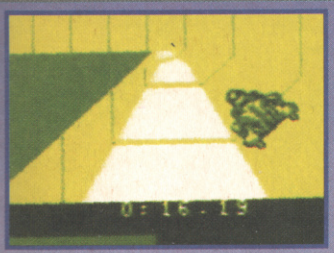
Keep those skis (bottom right) straight and you'll gain both speed and distance.

Once in the air it's a case of keeping the skis straight otherwise you'll come a cropper.



With strong graphics and gameplay the biathlon is the best event on offer in the Amiga version.

GAME BOY ▸ by US GOLD ▸ £TBA



Like the Amiga version the bobsleigh event is certainly strong on gameplay. Feel that speed!

The skiing events are just as boring on the Game Boy.

Note the trail left behind. You don't get that in the Amiga game.

VERDICT

Game Boy Winter Olympics throws up no surprises either. Graphics are OK and are blur free. There's also a rather decent ski track effect left by your skier which isn't on the Amiga version. Sadly the biathlon event is nowhere near as good as the Amiga's, but events like the bobsleigh and speed skating benefit from the Game Boy's small joypad and allow for some serious speed to be built up. It's good fun and like the Amiga version this is hardly essential but I've found myself coming back for more and I suspect you will too.

PAUL RAND

VERDICT

Hmm. On the one hand this is like Epyx's classic Winter Games, which will please nostalgia heads; on the other games have come a long way in 10 years and joystick waggling affairs are not really acceptable any more. The graphics and sound are OK and all the events are playable, especially the biathlon and bobsleigh. The downhill can become boring though. Don't expect classic gameplay here, but it is the sort of game that you'll regularly return to for a quick sortie.

RIK SKEWS

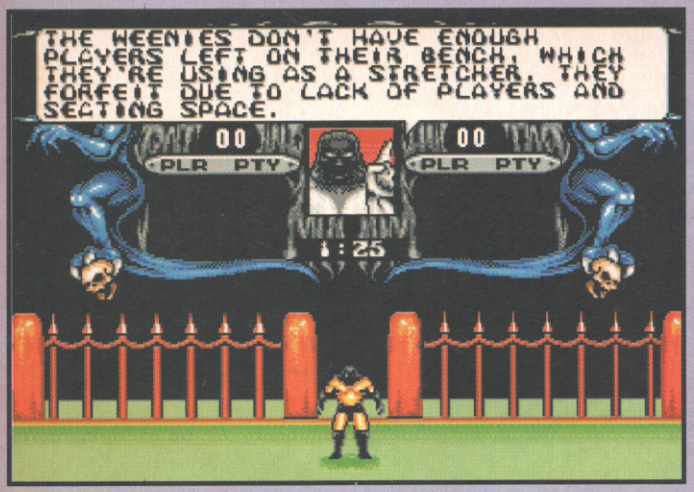
Speed skating is the most difficult event to master, but it's worth persevering with as it's fast and great fun, especially with a friend.

Here's the Amiga's closing ceremony. There's an opening one too, as there is on the Game Boy, but to be honest it's rubbish on the handheld version.

REVIEW

MEGA DRIVE | by ELECTRONIC ARTS | £44.99

Out now. Contact Electronic Arts (0753 549442) for information.



Mutant League Hockey

Not so jolly hockey-sticks in EA's extremely gruesome interpretation of an already violent sport

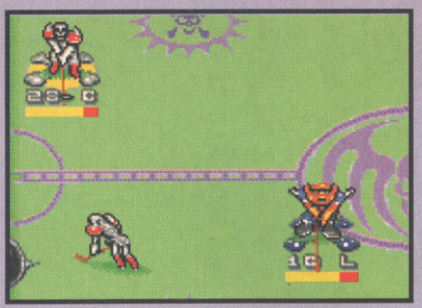
Normal hockey's violent enough, that's for sure. Compared to Mutant League Hockey though, it's like a Sunday tippy toe through the park when the summer flowers are in bloom. Want to know the rules? To be honest there aren't many, as bribing the ref, killing other players and melting the ice is thought of as quite acceptable gameplay.

Nasty boys

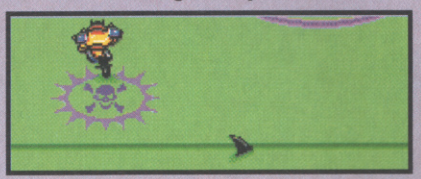
So how do you win? Well by scoring points, and also by killing so many of the opposition that they'll not be able to field a full team! That's an awful lot of slaughtering to do if you're to be champion. There are two divisions you see, each of which contains 10 teams of varying ability (check out their skull ratings). If you add to this two all-star conference sides and the all-league Galaxy stars and you've got, well a lot of hockey teams basically.

Pleasure and pain

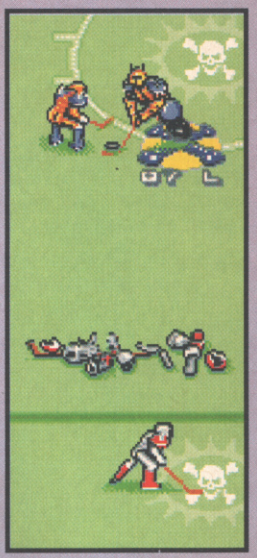
The game plays much like NHL Hockey (in other words just like real hockey) and features playoffs, penalties and, of course, regular matches. There's an option to use EA's 4-Way Play adaptor, but most interestingly the violence level can be set from 'rough' to 'total annihilation'. Add to this a variety of stadiums to play in, each of which has their own trips and pitfalls, and you've got a whole heap of fun.



Players have strength bars which start off yellow and turn red depending on how much damaged they've suffered.



Each stadium has its own built-in disaster, like this shark lurking under the ice ready to pounce.



Some of the players simply fall to pieces if they're hit too much.

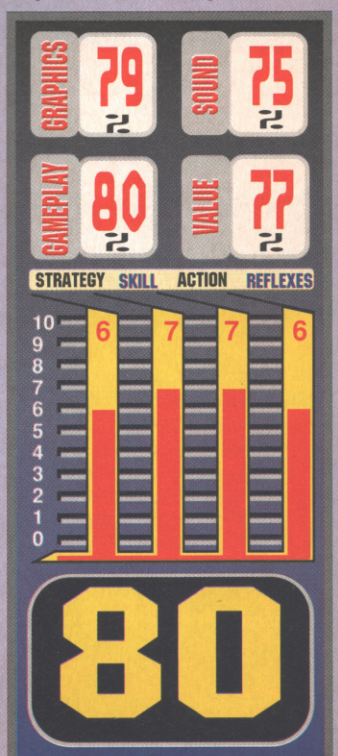
This skeletal figure drops the puck down to you. While waiting for the puck to fall hit the opponents to weaken them.

If a competitor falls through the ice you can see their shadow drifting along – very Omen II-esque. Sick but funny.

VERDICT

Although Mutant is heavily based on the NHL Hockey game engine, it does have new features. Most importantly the violence has been retained from the original EA Hockey, and it's a right laugh watching players fall to pieces, or see them float under the ice. Sound is good too, with some crunchy FX. The main problem, though, is it's difficult to keep track of which player is under control, making it tricky to score. Even so it's worth buying since it's such fun, but play with a friend 'cos the computer's very defensive and boring.

RIK SKEWS



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Darkmere

Grab your sword, polish your armour and look mean and moody in Core's new arcade adventure. Grrrrrhhhh

Here's where you start the adventure. Spooky huh?

There's some highly realistic sounds like bird noises to be found on this level.

To be honest the fight sequences are a little disappointing and it can prove difficult to line yourself up with an opponent.

This is an isometric 3D arcade adventure cum RPG, so have a quick guess about what angle the plot is going to take? An environmental stance perhaps, or maybe something about the current unemployment situation. No of course not it's all silly names and evil demons once again.

Ebryn, son of Gildorn

In Darkmere you're Ebryn, son of Gildorn the Elven king. For many years the villagers have been plagued by a fate worse than an Elvis CD stuck on continuous play – they have been terrorised by a dragon called Enywas. Despite Gildorn's pleas, the Elven council refused to help the people of Darkmere. Eventually Gildorn couldn't stand it any longer and after a quick chat with his mentor (the unusually stupidly named Malthar the Mage) got hold of a mighty blade from him.

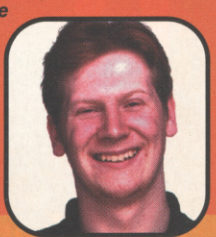
Malthar the Mage

Anyway, to cut a long story short Gildorn wasted the dragon but was banished from his own race for interfering with human destiny. Time passed. Years later Gildorn had grown old but had taught his son Ebryn to fight and given him the mighty blade. Quite handy really, because since Gildorn had grown old there had been nobody to keep a check on evil and as such it had taken a grip on the land. As heir to Gildorn's throne it

As tempting as it is to chop up the bunnies, it's not advised as the sword will drain power from you for being evil.

VERDICT

I'd be lying if I said I liked arcade adventures but Darkmere goes a long way towards changing my mind. Graphically this is a treat and reminds me of Heimdall, Core's classic arcade adventure. The detail in the backgrounds creates an intense atmosphere, as does the superb music, the sound FX are a little disappointing though. There's a lot to do in this game and although it's unlikely to convert anyone to the arcade adventure genre, as the reviewing cliche goes 'if you're a fan of the genre then you'll love this'.



PAUL RAND

INTROMATION

The game's introduction tells the complete story behind Darkmere, a time when darkness hung over the kingdom until Gildorn banished Enywas, the evil dragon. It then goes on to tell how the darkness reappeared as Gildorn got old. Now it's down to Gildorn's son Ebryn to clear the evil that has spread over the land again. Is Enywas behind it once more? That's up to you to find out...

VERDICT

Darkmere's presentation is great and similar in style to the excellent Heimdall, but more gloomy. Martin Iveson's score adds further to the game's mystical kick and thankfully the gameplay matches up to the audiovisuals. There's a double-whopping amount of stuff to explore and solve. It never becomes frustrating thanks to the decent control method and logical puzzles. Gripes? The fighting is rather hit and miss and there are few new ideas, but overall it gets a swollen OK from me.

RIK SKEWS

When you're near an orc your blade glows as a warning.

looks like it's up to you to uncover the curse of Darkmere...

Larry the lamb

What this involves is Ebryn wandering through an isometric world interacting with people and objects he meets. The interface, which can make or break these games, is smoothly handled and movement is achieved by pointing to the area you wish to move to on-screen and clicking. Combat takes place by standing near a baddie, pressing fire and moving the joystick – different joystick combinations give different attacks.

Although there are only three levels, each of them contain over 150 screens so you should be kept busy for a while.

Lenny the lion

Examining objects and interacting with people is simplicity itself. You simply click over the desired item and a range of options are presented to you; examine, eat, that sort of thing. One slightly irritating point is that all the things available to interact with on-screen appear at the same time. While this is fine the first couple of goes, it can be irritating when you know what you're looking for and have to scroll through a large list. Still it's only a minor gripe as you'll see from the verdict section...

AMIGA

PROS: Superb attention to detail and classic gameplay.
CONS: Nothing particularly new here, and there are a few control problems.

GRAPHICS	Like Heimdall, and you can't really ask for more than that can you?	89%
SOUND	Moody soundtracks, but the sound FX lack realism.	82%
GAMEPLAY	Easy to get into, great control and plenty to explore.	84%
VALUE	It's not cheap but there are 600 screens for you to make your way through.	80%

MISS OK HIT!

82

THE GREAT ZOOL HI-FI GIVEAWAY

Yes combine two pleasures in one – play Zool on your Mega Drive whilst listening to your new trendy stereo. Both of which you can win right here...

Yes, we're only teasing. If you win you'll receive this Panasonic stereo, and not the rather old and crumbly one that Zool's holding aloft.

Zool the Ninja of the Nth dimension, is Gremlin's flagship character, and his blend of hi-speed platform and bash-'em-up action has won the Zool game critical acclaim from us media types, and you readers have no doubt thought the same because you've taken it to numero uno in the charts.

So why is CVG discussing the merits of this product? Well, Gremlin would like to say thank you to CVG readers for their support, and because words alone are not enough, they are giving away a foot stomping stereo system. And fortunately it's not the one that Zool is holding aloft but is in fact a Panasonic compact hi-fi system which is pictured at the bottom of the page. It boosts all the top features like MASH technology on the CD deck, twin tape decks, and full remote control with motorised volume.

But does it end there? Well no, as the first prize winner will also get a copy of the game and some Chupa Chup lollies. Five more runners up can also expect a copy of Zool on the Mega Drive, a T-shirt and yep, more Chupa Chups.

Answer these three questions and pop your answers on a postcard please (not the insides of cornflake packets) and send to us at:

Zool backwards spells Looz, and I don't want to! CVG, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU

Q1:IN THE GAME, ZOOL IS THE DEFENDER OF WHICH DIMENSION?

a) 407589219558
b) Nth
c) The one sung by the Prodigy.

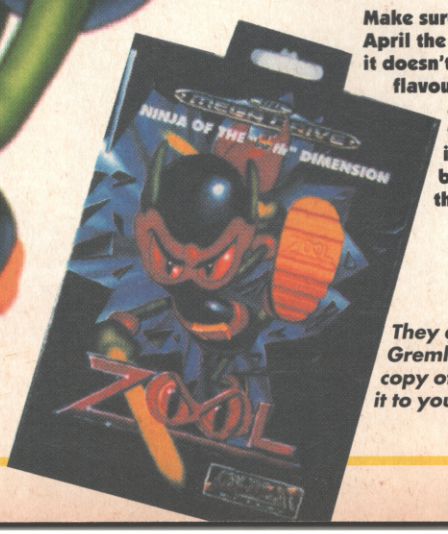
Q2: WHICH POPULAR LOLLIPOP IS FEATURED IN ZOOL?

a) Something foreign and not from Spain.
b) The one held by the traffic lady.
c) Chupa Chups

Q3: ZOOL HAS TO TRAVEL THROUGH MANY WORLDS IN THE GAME. IN WHICH WOULD YOU SEE A HI-FI?

a) Planet Hollywood's kitchen
b) Music world
c) Deniz's technology emporium.

Make sure your entry reaches us by April the 15 this year, and good luck. If it doesn't we'll eat your banana flavoured Chupa Chups. Oh and anyone (and their friends and family) from the companies involved can enter this compo, but they can't win anything, so there.



They are so kind those people at Gremlin, not only will they send you a copy of Zool if you win, but they'll send it to you in a nice little box like this.

REVIEW

SNES | OUT ON IMPORT | £59.00

Out now. Contact Console Concepts (0782 712759) for information.

TURN and BURN

It's not often that a game gets converted up from a Game Boy to a SNES. So can this pretend flight simulator turn your head?

This game doesn't deserve to be termed a simulator – not by a long shot. Sure, it appears to behave like one, complete with mission briefings, various head-up displays and in-flight twiddly bits. However, you soon guess that this is going to be a simple shoot-'em-up the moment you launch off your carrier, having done little more than crank up your speed: since when has a true flight sim made it easy for you to take off?

The other limiting factor is that you're stuck with one type of aircraft, and likewise the same weapons for each mission. And they're very limited of course, which can leave you flying round like a prat when you've just wasted 10 missiles trying to lock-on to one enemy plane.

In flight you can look over each shoulder to check on baddies which attack from behind.

You need to land on your carrier when it's necessary to refuel your plane. Quite easy actually.

You need to destroy a number of jets to complete a mission.

Go for a spin

Of course it makes sense to use your radar, that's what it's there for, and you'll use it a lot to line yourself up for attack before the enemy is actually visible. Strangely enough, the enemy has a habit of following your right-hand side, so panning to the left will bring them round in sight. Mess around too much, and you'll have to go for a refuel by landing on your carrier.

With new levels, the enemy becomes more intelligent and aggressive, launching homing missiles and attacking you in groups from either side. Your options at such times are limited to launching flares (which isn't much use) or going for fancy air manoeuvres, like rolls and loops. A camera will even record your skills.

Mechanics aside, there is little more to extract from this game.

This is your map screen; handy for looking for your ship.

Take off is very simple and is an automated process unlike real flight-sims.

Explosions are nice if you get chance to see one.

VERDICT

Comparisons with Super Air Diver are inevitable here. The action is the same sort of simplistic dog-fight affair, with the usual weapons to select and either night and day missions. Unlike Air Diver, the action is viewed from inside the cockpit, which makes it far more responsive, realistic and easier to target opponents. The Mode 7 horizons create a superb illusion of speed and you can even look over your shoulder. However, it is dreadfully repetitive and the view gets boring quickly and it's very similar to G-Loc in the arcades.

DENIZ AHMET

REVIEW

CD-i | by PHILIPS | £34.99

Out now. Contact Philips (081-781 8251) for information.

Kether

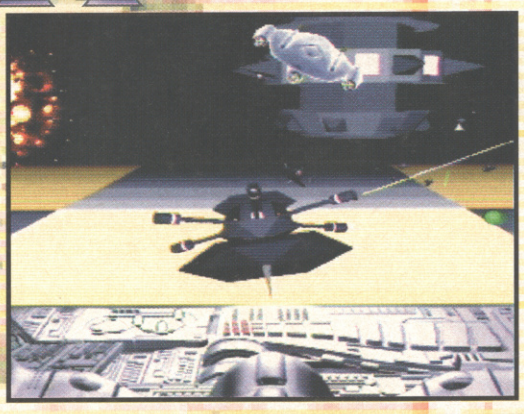
Kether shows that the CD-i doesn't need an FMV board to offer a decent game. But how well does it handle action without one?

Kether is a strange game, as you would expect from a French company. It merges fancy flying sequences, which look like something out of Sega's Silpheed, with puzzle tests and maze levels.

The challenge is structured in a way which requires you to travel through five space temples gathering five items of symbolic relevance which are then grouped together to complete your mission.

Dodge-'em-up

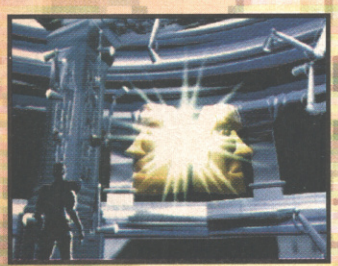
You can start on any of the temples so there's no linear route to follow. First thing you do is fly through a 3D maze course which is a dodge-em affair. This is easily the best part of



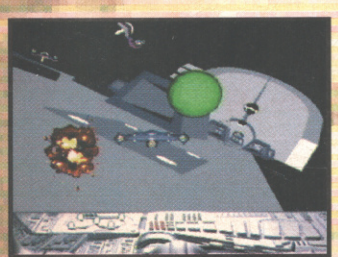
Apart from the linear gameplay the other problem with CD games is that your craft never seems to be part of the action. Instead it always seems more like a cardboard cut-out.

RIGHT: Is it us or does this pass more than a slight resemblance to Star Wars?

BELOW: One of the many impressive scenes from the intro sequence.



I wish you could hear the voice that accompanies this section. It really is tragic stuff.



Despite the impressive background scenery the bullets' graphical effects are disappointing.

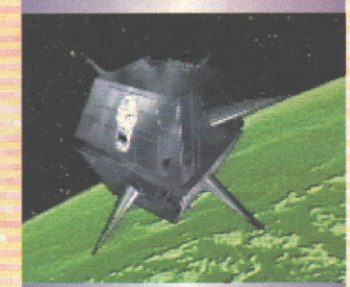
BEST OF FIVE

To complete your quest you must finish the challenges in five different and variously difficult temples. You can start on anyone that you wish, but you must visit all of them to finish the game. Below are the temples in order of difficulty:

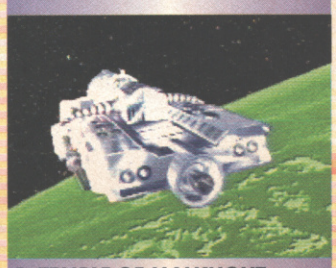
1. TEMPLE OF HOCHMATT

2. TEMPLE OF GEBOURAH

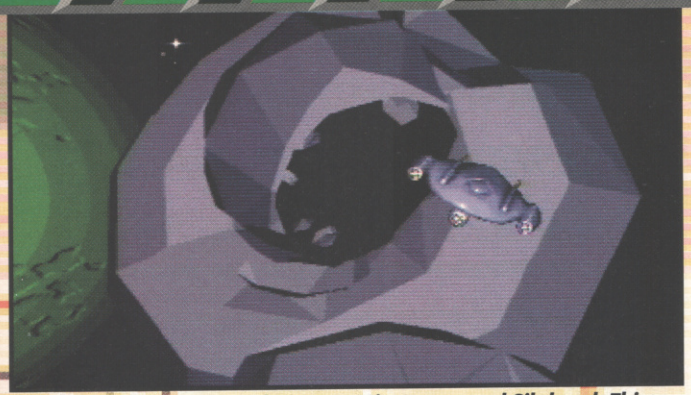
3. TEMPLE OF NETZACH



4. TEMPLE OF HOD



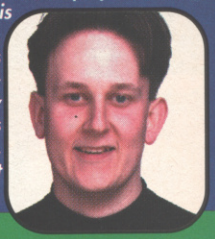
5. TEMPLE OF MALKHOUT



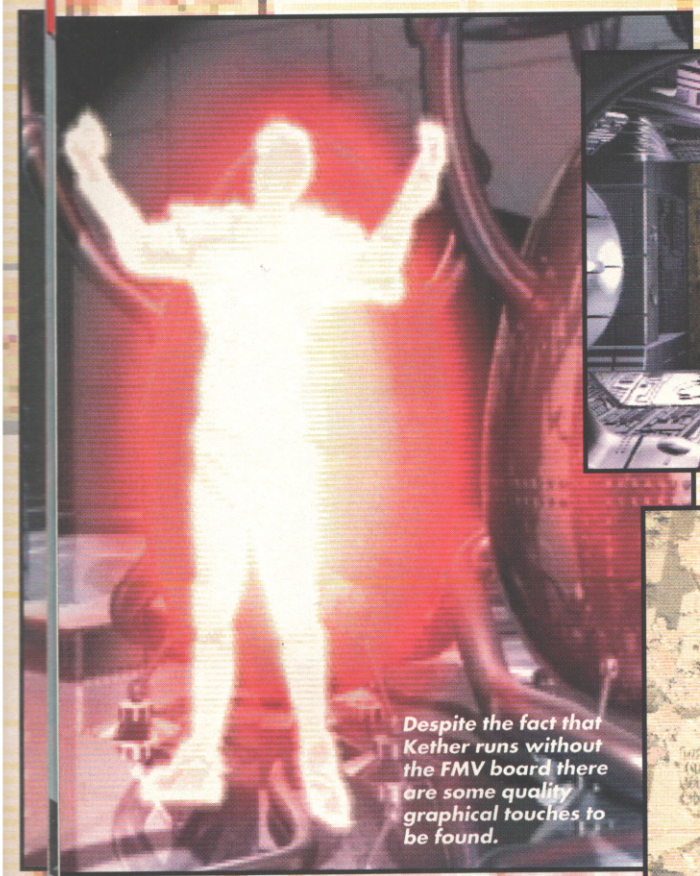
Kether plays like a cross between Microcosm and Silpheed. This tunnel sequence is very similar to Microcosm.

VERDICT

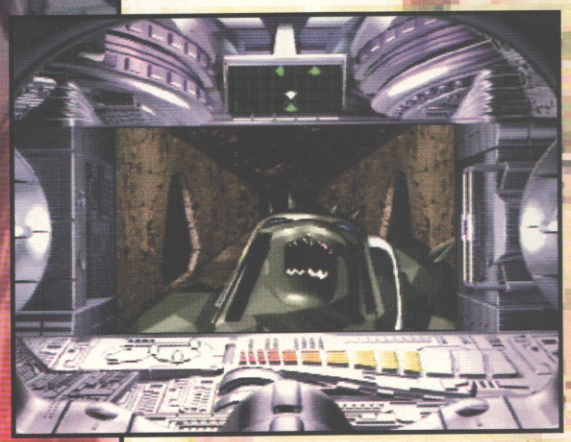
The dialogue in Kether is hilarious, unfortunately I don't think that was the intention – it sounds like something out of a school play. The dodging flight sections are stomach churning, but it is still good fun in a Silpheed kind of way. Unfortunately, the other elements like puzzles and mazes spoil the game and aren't challenging enough. However, I do like the way you can start on different stages since this gives the game some depth. All in all though, it's another typical CD game with decent audiovisuals but fairly shallow gameplay.



RIK SKEWS



Despite the fact that Kether runs without the FMV board there are some quality graphical touches to be found.



One of the baddies. Blast him quick or you'll die!

If you make it through you then have to crack a simple puzzle. It's not always clear what to do, and the clock is against you, but you can ask the computer for help if you need it.

Seek and you shall find – maybe

Finally, you enter the labyrinth of that temple. It's here where you have to seek out five stone symbols, find the exit and receive a message about Kether which is important to your quest. If you pass all of the tests you can exit the temple and return to the galactic map, where you head for another temple to continue the quest.

VERDICT

What a strange game. There's lots of smart graphics as you'd expect, and the flying sequences are quite fun, however, these are the same each time. But what makes you laugh is the over acted Doctor Who-type voice of the computer commentator which never seems to shut-up. The puzzles you face are too easy to be challenging and the maze sections really let the game down. Why these don't scroll is beyond me, and the creatures in them are rubbish. Even so, at least it doesn't need an FMV board to run.

DENIZ AHMET

Although Kether succeeds more than most CD products, gameplay wise it's still too linear. You'd never choose the dangerous routes that the computer forces you through in this level for example.

the game, but it's damn hard to steer through because the control pad isn't very responsive. Try and collect green pods while you're flying as these replenish your energy, though you lose it quickly when objects bash into you. The clever bit is that you can fly anywhere and hit anything, which isn't usually the case in games like this.

Out: March. Contact Philips (081-781 8251) for information.

Don Bluth presents Space ACE

Visually, It's the most action packed game around. But the gameplay seems to be the complete opposite. Eh?

You become stronger as Ace.

CD-ROM may be being hailed as the interactive saviour, but Space Ace is no more interactive on CD-i than any other format it's appeared on. The problem you see, is inherent in its design. As a coin-op game it was designed to turn heads and lure you into having a go for curiosity's sake.

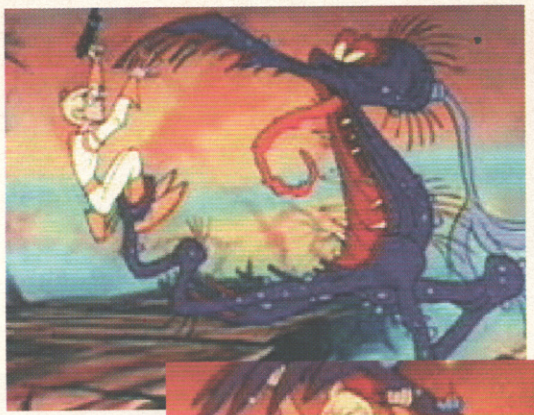
Certainly, it pulled the crowds, but gameplay wise it was no winner.

What you get is a story, a cartoon which unravels in scenes where you have to make well-timed predictions or it's curtains. The problem is that you never really know when you should be playing or watching. Given this, the gameplay becomes highly experimental and each puzzle is a matter of trying each of the five possible reactions on your part.

Big boy

The firebutton can be used to for shooting and to metamorphosise the wee Dexter into defender of the world - Ace: a muscular handsome sod who can wrestle with creatures and perform heroic acrobatic feats, plus he's a darn good shot to boot. Just be prepared to revert to your child form at some very awkward moments. Should you miss the chance to energise, gameplay continues but you have to follow a more challenging route.

Flight sequences are always tricky. Be impressed if you get it right first time.



Having misjudged your move, you receive a new animated sequence showing your death. Problem is, you never know if you're doing the wrong thing until you've done it..

What's a bit of a waste, is that there are more animation clips for the wrong moves than the right ones. No doubt because the game is hard.

Size isn't everything

In Space Ace there's no choice of difficulty levels and your three lives run out drastically, plus it's frustrating with when you die at the end of a scene and have to restart. There's also a slight delay in registering your moves from pad to software which doesn't aid the interactive feel of the game, especially during those hectic flying scenes.

VERDICT

While you may have seen Space Ace on other formats, you perhaps won't have clocked it in the arcades as it first appeared in 1984. The laser disk version wowed the punters with stunning cartoon graphics, but annoyed them with almost no gameplay whatsoever. The CD-i version is the same – the Digital Video cartridge shows off the visuals perfectly, but no attempt has been made to improve on the simple reaction-test gameplay. Good to show off the DV cart's capabilities, but ultimately a waste of money.

PAUL RAND

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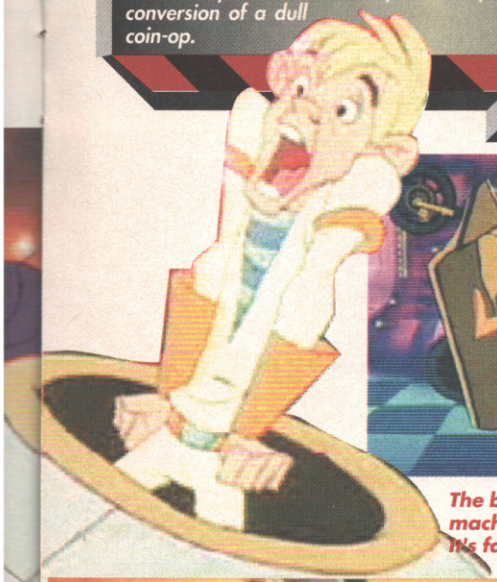
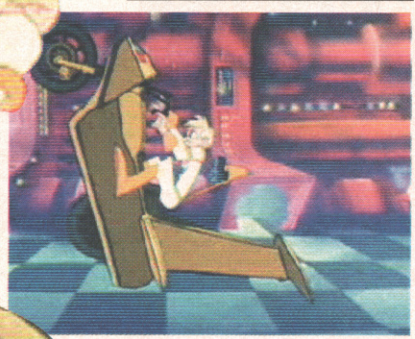
VERDICT

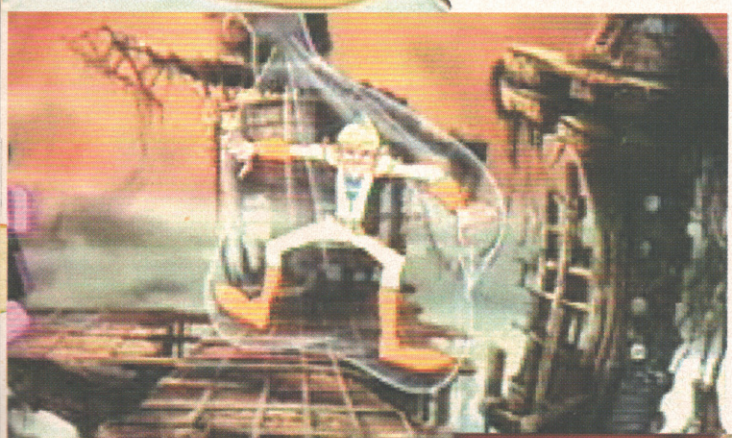
For the on-looker, Space Ace looks brilliant. The sound and graphics are outstanding and it all moves smoother and faster than any other CD-based game. However, nothing has been done to improve the gameplay from the coin-op it originates from, and so you're left with a game that involves pushing the joystick a few times each minute. Once you've learnt the combos, the game isn't going to take more than a couple of hours to complete. A superb conversion of a dull coin-op.

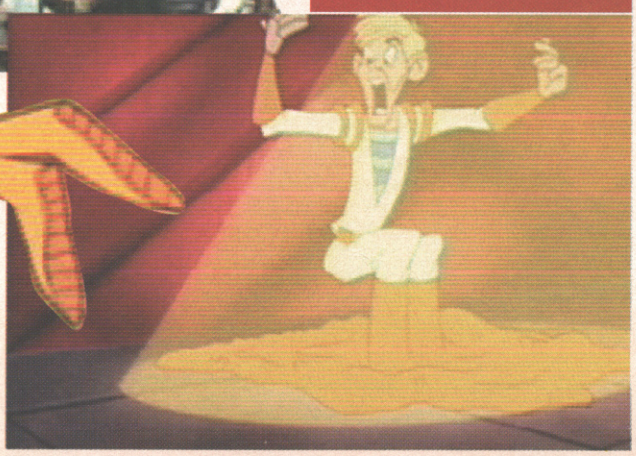
DENIZ AHMET





The bike is just one of the few machines our pal has to use. It's fast, so harder to jusge.





For what it set out to achieve, which is an accurate conversion of the coin-op, Space Ace has come out admirably. The introduction is fully engrossing and it's certainly a lot more feasible than buying a laser disc player to get to play the game in full.

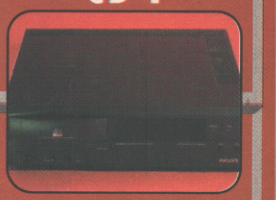
It's not always obvious what to do. However, as there are only five possibilities, try 'em till one works.

SPACED OUT

As you probably know, Space Ace is the sequel to Dragon's Lair. When first released, Dragon's Lair was yonks ahead of the competition in terms of technology, and remains one of the few games to run off a laser disc. Predictably, it's also one the first game releases on the American LaserActive consoles.

Despite the fact that Dragon's Lair and Space Ace presented an identical gameplay interface, and got criticised for it, creator Don Bluth went on to produce yet another coin-op to follow on from Space Ace. Entitled Super Don Quixote, punters finally received a more real and playable game with more options and paths open for progression. Unfortunately, few arcades invested in the final instalment and so Super Don Quixote remains something of a best kept secret. How about digging it up, Philips?

CD-i



PROS: Stunning graphics and sound.

CONS: Gameplay is non-existant.

GRAPHICS — Awesome use of digital video and brilliant definition. Loads to see. **98%**

SOUND — Excelent synchronisation and crisp stereo sounds. Funny too. **97%**

GAMEPLAY — Child's play. Shallower than a paddling pool. **15%**

VALUE — There's no game here, but it's a good conversion; hence, some marks. **29%**

MISS OK! HIT

51

Out now. Contact US Gold (021-625 3366) for information.

TERMINATOR

RAMPAGE

The year is 2029 and mankind is being slaughtered by the machines. Can you stop the brutal terminator rampage?

Even the top-of-the-range Terminators are no match for an Uzi 9mm and some gritty determination.

Look what those machines did! Not only do they hate mankind but they hate flowers and bunny rabbits too.

Carnage, mindless violence and big guns have always been good ingredients for a computer game and with Doom currently the hottest, bloodiest slaughter-fest on the PC, Bethesda has come up with Terminator Rampage, a smoothly scrolling 3D shoot-'em-up with violence, robotic death machines and loud explosions in generous abundance.

Ah the shotgun. It reloads with a satisfying click and blows holes the size of manhole covers in anything metallic.

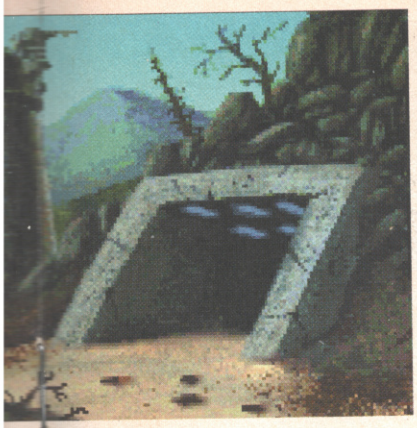
Time to kill

Rampage is the sequel to the old flick-scrolling shoot-'em-up Terminator 2029 and the plot is as tangled and tortuous as the movie. Set after the events of Terminator 2, John Connor and the rebels won the war against the machines by destroying the Skynet Orbital Platform. However, just as it exploded Skynet cleverly launched a modified Terminator, called a Meta Node, back into 1984 to the Cyberdyne Laboratories to alter the time-line and neatly avert its own destruction. You have been sent back in time to stop the Meta Node interfacing with the Cyberdyne computers and to save the future of mankind. Got all that? Good. Let's move on.

TONS OF TERMINATORS TO TACKLE

So, you're a Terminator fan huh? You want to save mankind and battle indestructible robots against overwhelming odds with little more than a peashooter? Well you got it.

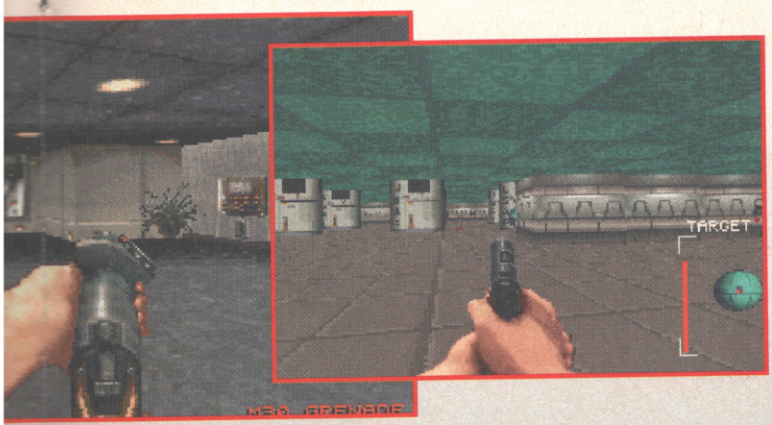
Apart from Terminator Rampage here and the original Terminator 2029, the Terminator nuts among you can also get your future-fix from Virgin's T2, a faithful coin-op conversion that has everything bar the cabinet-mounted Uzis. It can get a bit dull and repetitive after a while, but the two player version is a hell of a lot of fun.



VERDICT

Rampage is a highly atmospheric game – the 3D graphics technology and the sound are pretty darned good. Sadly, however, the gameplay is a bit dull and if you're a Doom fan like me, you may find the whole thing a bit too slow. Although Rampage can certainly be fast and furious, there isn't enough ammo' dotted around to make staying and slugging it out a really viable option. But despite this, Terminator Rampage grew on me in a big way. It's an awesome challenge and will take you a hell of a long time to beat.

GARY LORD



Morality? Pah!

Using a variety of weapons including your humble handgun, the M-16, the Uzi and a rather impressive minigun, you must prowl the corridors of the Cyberdyne Labs searching for 16 gun pieces that will enable you to construct a huge ultra cannon and thus destroy the Meta Node.

Yes, what it all boils down to is three main things: walk along dark, moodily lit corridors; shoot robots and search rooms; and finally construct the gun, destroy the Meta Node, torch the building and escape heroically through the nearest window. Simple really.

If you grab hold of the minigun you can cause A1 havoc. On the later levels you need it, believe you me.

Check out the superb 3D Gouraud, er, light-source shaded corridors.

VERDICT

Rampage is one of the toughest games I've played in a long time. OK I admit it, I'm a Terminator fan, but Rampage is not only damned difficult it's beautifully presented with great music and light-sourced, texture-mapped corridors that are incredibly detailed. You really must have a top-notch 486 machine for this one, and if you want to get the whole experience try playing it in the dark with the sound cranked up. It's not a Doom beater, but it's a much harder game and I think you'll have a lot of fun with it.

PAUL RAND

Eat lead and die

If you're familiar with Doom, Wolfenstein or even Ultima Underworld you'll have an idea of how Terminator Rampage moves. It's silky smooth and highly atmospheric; the corridors are eerily empty and the Terminator 2 theme tune plays along in the background. If you ever get bored with Doom (!) or if you're just a rampant Terminator fan, Terminator Rampage is a challenging shoot-'em-up and, apart from Doom, it must be the most atmospheric 3D game around.

PC

PROS: Superb, speedy graphics and very tough to beat.
CONS: It's been done before, and better, by Doom.

GRAPHICS — Superb 3D routines but still not a patch on Doom. **89%**

SOUND — The Terminator theme tune pounds away and the guns go bang. **85%**

GAMEPLAY — It's involving but sometimes there aren't enough enemies. **81%**

VALUE — It's a very difficult game which won't disappoint Terminator fans. **83%**

MISS OK HIT

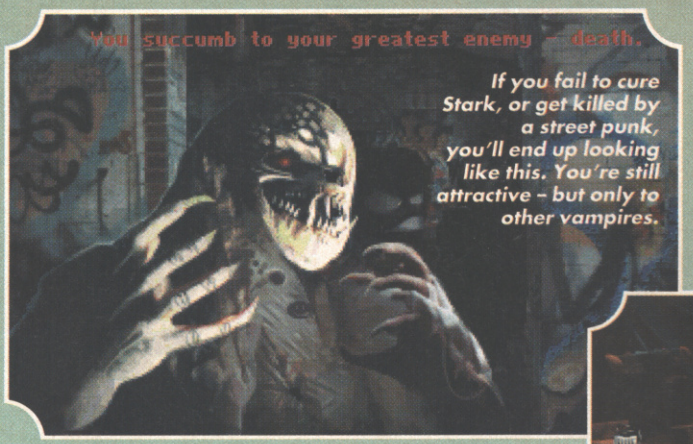
83

Out now. Contact MicroProse (0454 326532) for information.

BLOODNET

A futuristic vampire blast, but is it an RPG, graphic adventure or some where in-between?

The world of Cyberspace is a gateway to information, contacts and most importantly a vital source of clues.



If you fail to cure Stark, or get killed by a street punk, you'll end up looking like this. You're still attractive – but only to other vampires.

IT'S CYBER

BloodNet draws its inspiration from cyberpunk. Pioneered by William Gibson in his novel Neuromancer, cyberpunk is a place where chaos, poverty and disease are rampant and street gangs prowl the street. All information and business is carried out electronically in a computer generated world known as 'Cyberspace' and hackers use sophisticated equipment to break in and steal it.

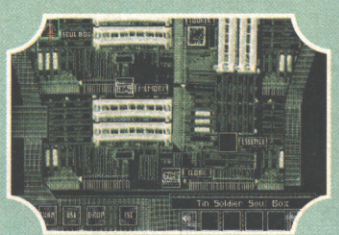
Someone doesn't like Stark and he's started telling him by leaving messages in er, blood.

The future is going to be bleak. Take New York in 2094: society has collapsed and street gangs, computer hacking and drug abuse is rife - no change there then. In the midst of this urban nightmare wanders Ransom Stark, a one-time computer hacker with a brain disease brought on by too much time spent in virtual reality.

Vampires

With the aid of a brain implant Stark can live a normal life, but he is being stalked by Van Helsing, an undead vampire lord. This is where the game begins and where you have to guide Stark across the city, searching for a way to cure the disease.

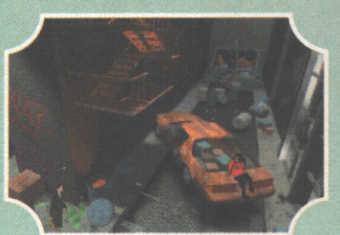
Although BloodNet looks like a graphic adventure, it is more like a role-playing game. At the beginning you can only visit a limited number of locations, but as you piece together the complex plot, new ones will present themselves. Your quest won't just take you around Manhattan either; Stark can also access or 'jack' into Cyberspace, a computerised world of VR. Oh and there's combat here too, both in the real world and the cyberspatial one, along with puzzles, sub-plots and red herrings.



Getting into Cyberspace is a simple matter of hooking your head up to a 'deck'.

It's like Blade Runner right?

No, it isn't quite like Blade Runner, but if you've seen the movie you'll have an idea of how BloodNet looks and feels. There's a whole world to explore and somewhere in the middle is the cure for Stark's vampirism. But be warned, to stave off the disease you'll have to feed on human blood. This ain't nice so if you've got any concrete morals put them back in the cupboard next to your copy of Syndicate. BloodNet is brutal.



The city in BloodNet isn't the most scenic place in the world.

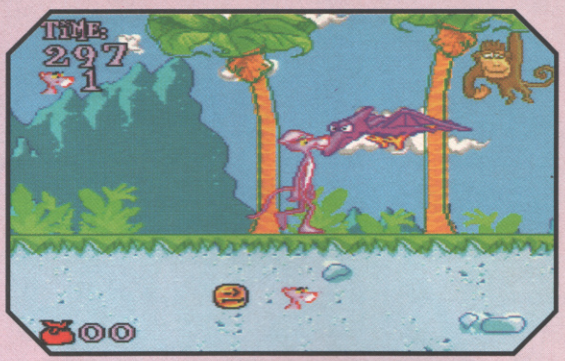
Combat is resolved on a turn basis and is far from easy.

VERDICT

BloodNet is stunning. With its dark, oppressive mood, combat, puzzles and cyberspace sequences, it's one hell of a challenge. But it must be said that this game isn't going to appeal to everyone. Remember it's more of an RPG detective game than a graphic adventure, and at times it's so weird and complex I just haven't a clue as to what is going on. But hey, if you fancy a challenge and you don't mind a bit of gratuitous killing and bad taste, then pop out and buy BloodNet. It's simply superb.

PAUL RAND

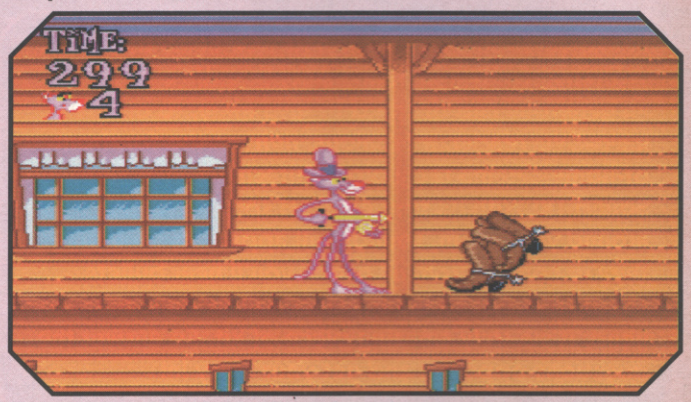
Out now. Contact Console Concepts (0782 712759) for information.



Extra items of clothing, like this head scarf, will protect you for at least one attack.

Pink goes to HOLLYWOOD

Slap-stick humour and lashings of pink infest your SNES in this spoof licence



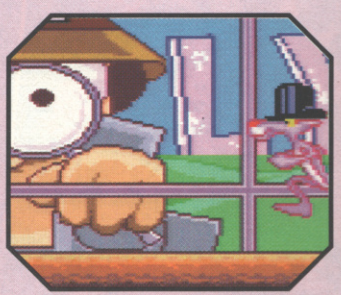
The paint gun is with you throughout the game. One squirt will dispose of baddies fairly swiftly.

You'd think that the Pink Panther would be an ideal culprit for a game, especially for a character who doesn't need to talk but relies on visuals gags to cause a chuckle. Looking at it like that, Pink certainly makes his mark in this 14 level spoof of Hollywood movies. Titles like Honey I shrunk the Pink, Pinkin Hood and Pink Beard, all provide familiar environments for our friend to get through.

While offering nothing in terms of platform originality, Pink somehow manages to capture the feel of his character precisely. The first thing you notice is the rather large and brilliantly done panther himself. Even that expressionless, casual stroll has been perfectly animated. That alone doesn't make the game, but Pink can sprint and spray his limitless supply of Pink paint at the few infesting creatures that are on each level, or sling a movie prop from a safe distance. If all that fails you can always jump on their head (yawn).

Pink panic

Progression isn't strictly linear as it's from the first stage that you hunt out the exits to the other levels. Not unexpectedly, you do encounter exits which are beyond your physical reach and for these you must find coins to insert in a slot machine. Doing so activates a bridge, crane, magic carpet or umbrella to get you that step closer to completing the game. Do everything logically, and the initial high difficulty curve soon retracts and the game becomes a joyous romp.

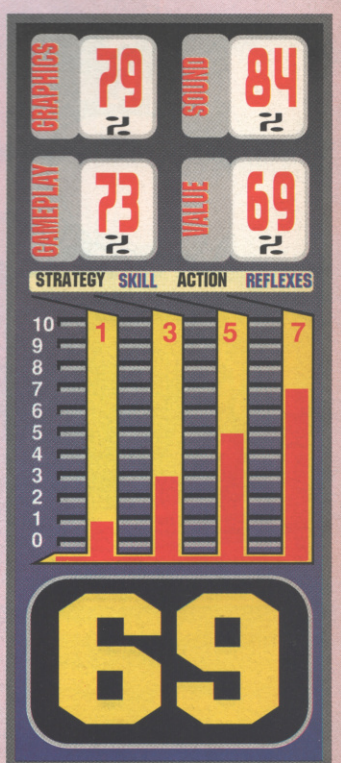


There are secret platforms to be found everywhere.

VERDICT

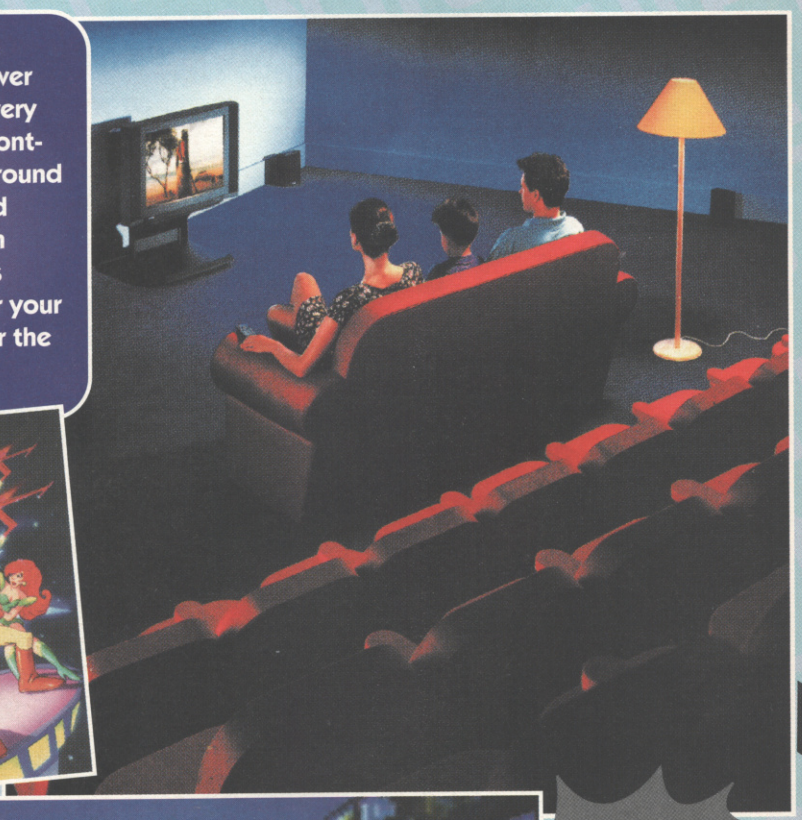
Good structure in a platform game is vital, and what's also important is that there's plenty to do. Pink scores on the former but not on the latter. And if that doesn't annoy you the suspect sprite detection will, or the fact that there's no restart points. It is easy progress through though because the baddies are always in the same place and lack any sort of intelligence, which is unforgivable. The only saving grace for Pink Goes To Hollywood is that it is actually a quite funny game, but gamers can't live by humorous platformers alone.

DENIZ AHMET



WIN A SURROU
TV SYSTEM WO

Imagineer is so pleased with its new SNES titles, Wolfenstein 3D and Space Ace, that it's come over all generous and decided to give away, to one very lucky CVG reader, a fabulous, right-at-the-forefront-of-home-cinema-technology Hitachi 25-inch Surround Sound TV! With its four external speakers placed around your room, sounds will appear as though they're coming from all over – you'll hear bullets shoot from left to right; planes will fly right over your head; it's a truly amazing piece of kit. So answer the questions opposite and get your entry in!



OUND SOUND
ORTH £1,000!
WITH IMAGINEER AND CVG!

What do you have to do to win this terrific prize, worth nearly £1,000? Well, as we're all rather large fans of war movies, we thought we'd get you to answer the following war film questions, as a loose sort of tie-in to Wolfenstein:

1. Who played in goal in the movie, set in WWII, 'Escape To Victory' – was it:

A: Bruce Grobbelaar?
B: Sylvester Stallone?
C: Mel Brookes?

2. Who, out of the following, did not star in 'Where Eagles Dare'?

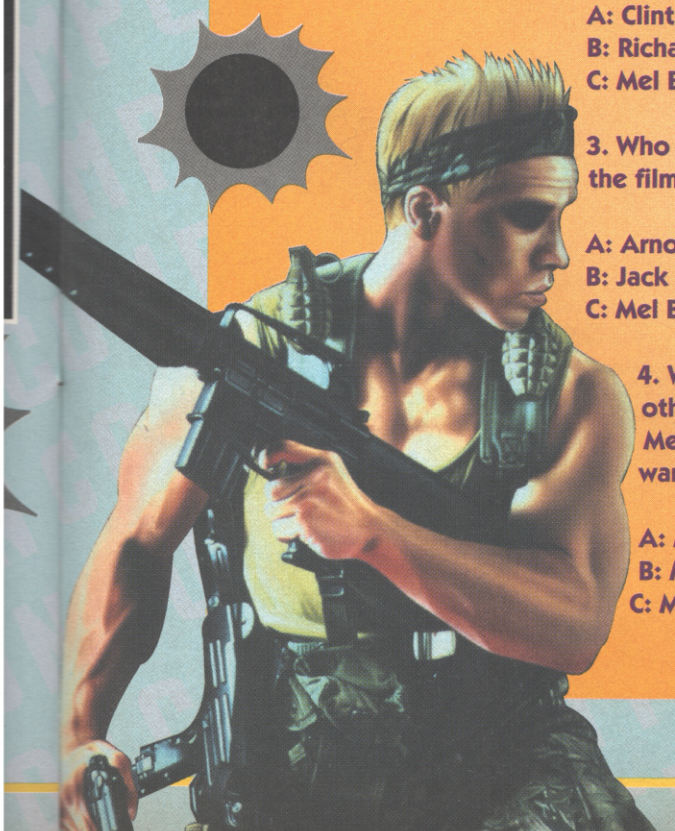
A: Clint Eastwood?
B: Richard Burton?
C: Mel Brookes?

3. Who played Adolf Hitler in the film 'To Be Or Not To Be'?

A: Arnold Schwarzenegger?
B: Jack Palance?
C: Mel Brookes?

4. Which of the following other people called Mel have also starred in a war film?

A: Mel Tormé?
B: Mel Gibson?
C: Mel Smith?



And when you've got those answers, then complete the following tie-breaker in not more than 12 words:

I COULD SORT OUT BORF MUCH BETTER THAN SPACE ACE COULD BECAUSE...

Once you've done all that, write it all down on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope, add your name, address and age and post it to:

GOTT IN HIMMEL! DIE SURROUND SOUND TV IST VEHR GUT!, CVG, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

This competition is not open to employees of EMAP or Imagineer, or the friends and families thereof. Please ensure that your entry reaches us no later than 14 April 1994, otherwise we will have you clapped in irons and thrown in Colditz. Then again, we might just consider your entry invalid. Good luck!

REVIEW

NEO GEO | by SNK | £159.99

Out now. Contact DGM on (081-965 8199) for more information.

Do we really need another beat-'em-up? Does it really matter if it's as good as this?

ART OF FIGHTING 2

In truest Streetfighter style the winning character rubs it in with a suitable unfunny, and often badly translated from Japanese, quote.

The original Art Of Fighting was one of the most popular Neo Geo carts ever, so SNK has really pulled out the stops for the sequel. And it shows. The initial spec is one of the most impressive yet for a beat-'em-up on this system. With 12 characters, each featuring at least three special moves, full camera-style zooming when the fighters get in close and new backdrops, AOF2 clocks in at an incredible 130 plus megs!

Kill! Death! Maim!

In the original AOF you had to rescue Ryo's (the hero) sister, Yuri, who was held hostage by Mr Karate. In a plot-twist worthy of the Neighbours award for writing excellence, Mr Karate turns out to be Ryo's and Yuri's dad. This leaves room for a new bad guy in the second game, the dreaded Mr Big, the world's most dangerous slap-head, and the man you must defeat.

Unlike most combat games, the special moves aren't total Streetfighter rip-offs. Sure, there are plenty of fireballs and near-dragon punches, but this is offset with lethal rapid fire punches and kicks, the likes of which have never been seen in a combat game before. Some of the joystick combinations for the special moves haven't appeared in combat games before, so it takes hours of practice just to master just one character.

Repeat-hit moves like this one do loads of damage.

Rage against the machine

One feature unique to Art Of Fighting is the Rage gauge. Power it up with the psyche buttons and the fighter starts to glow while making worrying growling noises, then they'll execute a special move which causes even more damage than usual,

VERDICT

In my opinion AOF2 is easily the best beat-'em-up to appear since Streetfighter II first hit the arcades – in fact I'd say it's much better than most of the new versions of Capcom's classic. Apart from the stunning graphics and excellent action it's also very, very difficult. Fighting your way through the last four characters takes nerves of steel and the kind of reflexes you get from drinking coffee by the bucket load. If you don't have a Neo Geo, get down to your local arcade now for the greatest combat experience of '94.

DENIZ AHMET

VERDICT

It sounds strange talking about a game which, to all intents and purposes, is actually better than Streetfighter II. Art Of Fighting 2 has everything in its favour, amazing graphics, stunning special moves and a difficulty level that's enough to stump most beat-'em-up fans. The story element makes the single-player game almost as playable as the two-player mode. What more needs to be said, other than I hope we get some good conversions soon.

GARY LORD

the downside, though, is that you can't block while psyching.

Battles are settled mainly with special moves, this means the battles tend to last a lot longer, so if you're playing the game in the arcades you get good value for money.

Like the first game, the screen zooms in when the fighters come together, although this time the effect's a lot faster a smoother, so it doesn't detract from the action as it did before.

The excellent Manga-style graphics make for some of the best visuals seen in any coin-op. Who needs polygons when you've got sprites like these?

JACKANORY

A particularly original feature of the one-player is that it actually follows a storyline. The characters are still thrown at you in a random order, but as the game unfolds you find out more about Mr Big's evil empire and that there might be a thirteenth fighter lying in wait for you. As you progress your character also learns super-powerful special moves, which are essential since the game is incredibly difficult from the seventh round onwards.

The power of the special moves depends on how powered-up the character's rage gauge is.

A bizarre multiple hit which does vast amounts of damage.

THE CHALLENGERS

Art Of Fighting 2 now boasts 12 characters, including the original heroes and villains.

NEO GEO

PROS: Easily the best beat-'em-up around. It's got the lot.
CONS: It's only on Neo Geo and coin-ops, so not everyone will get to play it.

GRAPHICS	Loads of excellent animation and smooth scaling.	95%
SOUND	Decent soundtrack, but excellent, over-the-top effects.	90%
GAMEPLAY	Simply the best Neo Geo beat-'em-up that you will ever see. Probably.	95%
VALUE	A bit pricey as Neo Geo games go.	90%

MISS OK HIT!

95

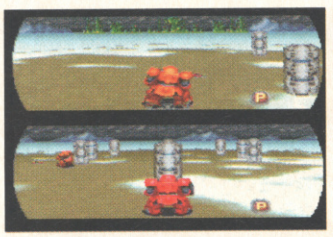
REVIEW

SNES ▶ OUT ON IMPORT ▶ £54-69

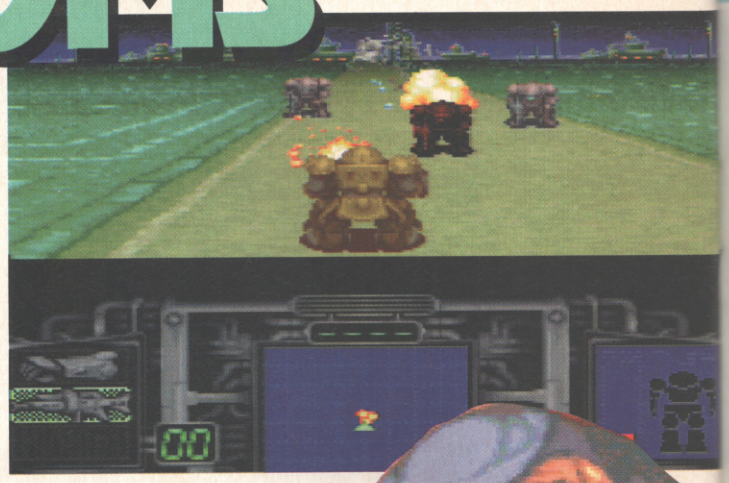
VOTOMS

Armoured Troopers enter the arena of Mode 7, DSP chip action. Could fast hectic action be ahoy...

Mode 7 on the SNES is a pretty effect. It can let you put lots of nice colours on a flat surface, then rotate it or zoom in and out on it. You see it in a lot of games, especially as an effect on bosses. However, when it's used as a main part of the game it's got to be done well. Mario Cart, Exhaust Heat II and Pilot Wings are the best examples. Votoms unfortunately, isn't. For starters it uses a DSP chip which should make it smooth and fast, but it doesn't - it just bungs up the price. That's besides the point though, because the main problem with Votoms is shallow gameplay.



Some sections have fixed scrolling. These are usually where you encounter the end-of-level boss.



Heavy metal

Shoved inside an Armoured Trooper you land on a Mode 7 map where you have to destroy others like yourself. The task is the same on each level, but the opponents get progressively

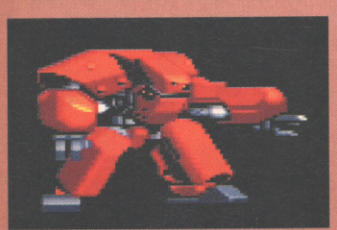
REVIEW

SNES ▶ OUT ON IMPORT ▶ £60-70

ACCELE BRID

Can the anime-style characters lift this head-on shoot-'em-up past the first level?

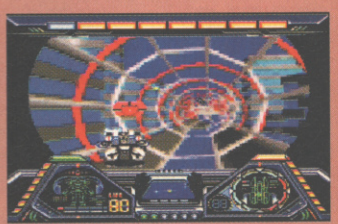
The Japanese have a thing about huge robots which transform into different kinds of attack vehicle. It's been used untold times in all that anime stuff that floods over here, and now it's increasingly appearing in their games.



Accele Brid is the latest tale. Here you essentially have a shoot-'em-up which takes place in various sorts of repetitive forward scrolling tunnels with you zooming around taking pot-shots at anything coming in the opposite direction – very much like Space Harrier.

Armed to the teeth

Now while that's all you're ever asked to do, there are plenty of options to make it all a bit more involving. At the outset you get to configure your armoured craft. For this you have a certain number of points which can purchase weapons for your left and right arms. Having done that you decide if you wish to be able to morph into an attack or defence flight craft. The benefit here is that one is faster, and the next more durable. Do all that and it's into the game proper.



The two weapons you've chosen can be charged up to allow for repetitive fire, so while you can use both at once, it makes sense to switch between the two at intervals. However, you can also punch and kick baddies and release the odd smartbomb, and you collect tokens for points and power-ups. With these points you later get a chance to move to a better attack craft, and so it goes.

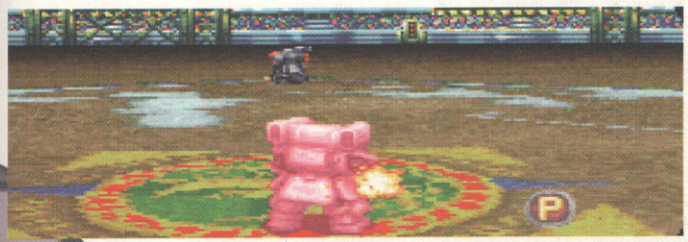
The object is always to try and survive for the length of each course. The question is: is that really worthy of you?

A power-up token awaits. There isn't many to be found.

aggressive and you start to encounter land mines camouflaged in the scenery. Occasionally, the game switches to a head-on face-off against a boss.

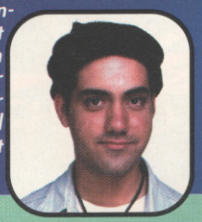
Effective disposal

When you complete a stage you receive a new weapon. There are only three of these to be gained, (but yes, there are more than three levels) and each is varied enough to provide a dab of strategy in switching between them to dispose of opponents more effectively. In two player mode it's quite fun, and you get to choose which trooper you want to play out of five basic models, change their colour and select the terrain to fight on. ●



VERDICT

Votoms tries to blend elements of Mario Cart with Cybernator into an action-packed blast-'em-up. Unfortunately, the end result is a repetitive dash around a series of dull Mode 7 landscapes. The speed and smoothness of the graphics is well below standard for a Mode 7 game using a DSP chip. But worse still is the awkward control system which uses the L and R buttons to steer your character like the overhead sections of Super Probotector. Two player mode handles well with its split screen, but those sprites are just too jerky.



DENIZ AHMET

ABOVE: Punch baddies to death if you get a chance. Hardly gripping stuff.

LEFT: In dual mode you have to destroy opponents in a head-to-head battle.

Out now. Contact Console Concepts (0782 712759) for info.

VERDICT

The shallowness of this game is shocking. The graphics are reminiscent of the C64, the tunnels loop endlessly, sprite animation is poor and the whole thing just lacks any imagination. Not only this but the game is just too hard – it's difficult to aim at anything successfully; sometimes baddies approach from behind, but you can't move forward so you have little chance of avoiding them. The radar should help you out, but it's just too small to decipher at a glance. The only good feature is the atmospheric music.

PAUL RAND

Select your weapons before you enter combat.

Contact Console Concepts (0782 712759) for info.

The Mode 7 backgrounds are the most repetitive we've seen for ages.

Your robot can change into different shapes, none of which are any cop.

REVIEW

AMIGA ▶ ADVENTURE SOFT ▶ £39.99 (£34.99 A600)

Out now. Contact Adventure Soft (021-325 0847) for information.

Simon the Sorcerer

VERDICT

'Strewth', I thought as the nine disks fell out of the box, 'this is going to be unplayable.' Boy was I wrong. Simon's been lavished with care and attention and the first place it shows is in the lack of disk swapping. Adventure Soft has ensured that adjoining scenes are on the same disk whenever possible. A nice touch and there's plenty more. Graphics are fantastic, even on the base machine. Gameplay's where it's at though, and it's funny, challenging plus the control is fantastic. Heck, even the manual's worth reading it's that polished.

RIK SKEWS

Here's where the adventure starts. What lies ahead for Saucy Simon?

The two-headed shopkeeper is more interested in arguing with himself than selling you anything.

An animated intro starts the game off nicely. Simon uses a point-and-click interface.

Even on the A600 the graphics are of the highest quality.

Watch out LucasArts, and other would-be adventure kings, here comes Adventure Soft ready to steal your crown

This troll's looking for satisfaction. But what could he mean?

This wise owl resides in the middle of the forest. He could have the answer to your problems.

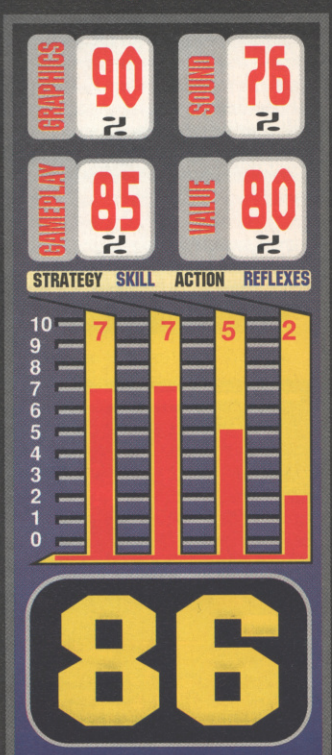
The first thing that strikes you about Simon the Sorcerer is that it makes you laugh. Now call me an old cynic if you like, but few things manage to these days. Because of this I've even forgiven Adventure Soft for using one of those classically cheesy plots. You know the sort of thing. A streetwise teenager who gets sucked into a land of wizards must beat the bad guy and save the kingdom.

Jigsaw puzzle

Simon the Sorcerer is an adventure-type game and the interface is the standard point-and-click type, with commands at the bottom of the screen. For instance, you can TALK TO characters on screen or CONSUME something. When you talk to characters you're given a number of possible replies to choose from, which range from downright sarcastic to sickeningly crawly. Unfortunately it's hard to resist the sarcastic option. I suggest you try because you won't get far in the game otherwise!

A good service

One of the major put-offs with adventure games is that they can be very difficult. You come across a puzzle and it takes a fortnight to solve it, which can prove very frustrating. To solve this you can talk to the people directly behind the game by telephoning 021-352 0847 every day between six and seven. Customer service or what?



Streetfighter? Swap the 'f' for 'sh' and you're nearer the truth

BLOOD SPORTS

Sonya Blade rip-off attacks Ken copy, while Ryu look-alike merely watches.

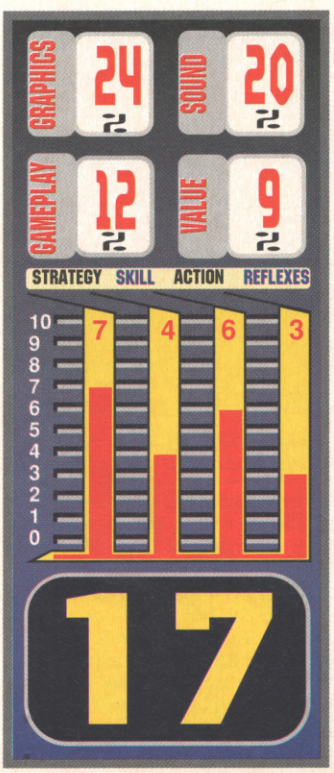
Not only do the sprites look rather poor, they're hideously animated, too. Two for the price of one.

Blood Sport is, yes, you guessed it, a Streetfighter clone. In fact, it's a Streetfighter clone with little bits of other beat-'em-ups thrown in.

Bloody hell

This is a shockingly mediocre piece of software, containing some of the worst graphics and gameplay I've seen. The sprites, while bearing a vague similarity to their 'real' counterparts, look like they've been put through a shrink-wash and hit with a mell-hammer. And as for the game itself? Well, any beat-'em-up these days has to have a unique selling point, and Blood Sport's is its complete lack of any redeeming features whatsoever.

Any of these lads and lasses look familiar?



ARCHIMEDES by MATT BLACK £TBA

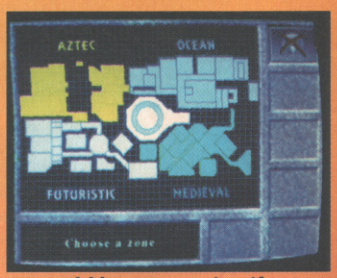
The Crystal Maze

Who said 32-bit games had to be good? Check out this awful Archie effort!

He may be doing Hula Hoop ads now, but Richard O'Brien became a star on Channel 4's cult game show, in which the contestants played a number of different games, the object being to collect crystals. These were then transformed into seconds in the Crystal Dome. Once the contestants reached the Dome, they had however many seconds they had accrued to collect as many gold tokens as they could to win a prize.

Bristol Maze

That's the idea, and it converted into a quite-jolly SWP coin-op which coughed up a fiver if you collected 50 or more gold tokens. Now it's on the Archimedes. And what a waste of resources it is. There are hardly any games to play, and the majority of them wouldn't look out of place on a Spectrum. They do, however, look out of place on a 32-bit RISC-based computer. This is an atrocious title which serves no purpose other than to make you turn off and load up an educational game.



It would be a-maze-ing if anyone harboured any thoughts of buying this woeful title.

Who needs 30 frames per second Gouraud shaded polygons when you can catch marbles in a drainpipe?

What can we say except 'Eeurgh!'

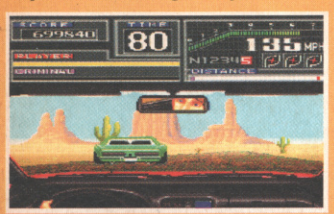
Out Now. Contact Sherston (0666 840433) for info.

ARCHIMEDES by SHERSTON £TBA

Out now: Contact Console Concepts (0782 712759) for information.

Super CHASE HQ

Here's the villain. Bash into the back of his car until he decides to pull over and give up.



Yet another SNES game with the word super in front of it. Is this cop game worth another chance or what?

When this happens, you known you've won. The quickest way to win is to use your turbo boosts for added impact and damage.

In this later stage, stay in the right lane or you face head-on traffic. Crashes waste time.

The good thing about Chase HQ II was that you got a gun to blast the baddies with. So why has Super Chase HQ got rid of the gun? Probably because you now take a backseat view of the chase, and this certainly gives the whole affair a more dramatic feel to it; but it also makes the gameplay area small and the graphics outside poorly defined.

Once again, the gameplay is about apprehending a series of criminals. You dodge in and out of cars for a minute or so, then your sirens go off and you have to bash into the crims' car and force it to pull over before time runs out. This can take ages, but the nitro turbos speed things up and keep you close to the baddies. Usually, the n'er-do-wells lean out of the car and start shooting at you too. Damage to your bonnet and their car indicates how close you are to making an arrest.

Take a-rest

Having made one arrest, it's time to do it all again on a different course as you chase after an elusive drugs smuggler. And that is all there is to it.

Fine, so there's a stack of courses to go through before you catch the entire gangster mob, but you'll find yourself giving up long before that. There's more fun to be had in crashing into the trees and tunnel walls, just to see the silly expressions pulled by your driver in his mirror.

VERDICT

Chase HQ II is something of a classic (originally), so Super Chase HQ shouldn't have ended up like this. Apart from the interior view-point and that you're lacking a shooting comrade, there is no difference in this to any of the other games. The graphics are fast, and the car handles well, but everything else is showing its age. The time limits are very tight and on some later levels you'll swear you've got no chance. Apart from the changes in scenery each chase is utterly repetitive in play and so becomes tedious. Avoid.

DENIZ AHMET

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	VALUE
60	70	50	40

STRATEGY	SKILL	ACTION	REFLEXES
4	3	4	6

50

REVIEW

PC | by VIRGIN | £29.99

Out now: Contact Virgin (081-960 2255) for information.

MORTAL KOMBAT

Having frozen Sonya, Sub can attack without fear of attack. Sub Zero is the most efficient and potentially powerful character in the game.

The last machine to receive the Kombat treatment looks like it's achieved the best conversion yet...

Considering that there's little censorship of software on the PC it's strange that a decent beat-'em-up has yet to arrive on that format. Could this be because of the unsuitability of PCs for action-based games? Well Virgin's latest PC beat-'em-up puts paid to that argument.

Packs a punch

Mortal Kombat on a 486 PC is a superb coin-op conversion – blood and 'death moves' an' all. The gameplay has been carried over well too, as coin-op tactics are fully useable. The best thing about the PC version however, is that it has corrected the problem found in all the other conversions – one character being able to beat the others by using just one move.

Bonus stage: tap the keys and smash different materials.

Intelligentsia

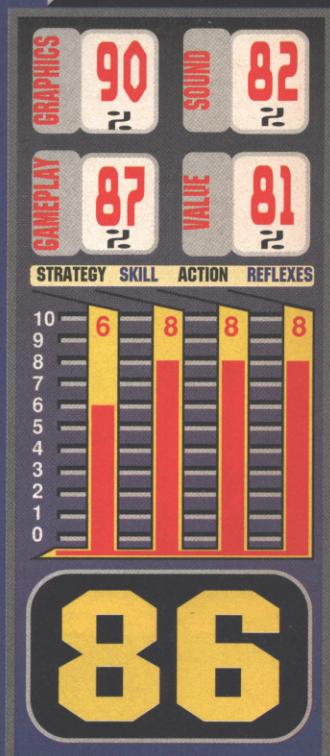
Here your opponents fight a more intelligent fight, so it becomes more playable as you progress and it's even equal to the coin-op on the hardest setting. Graphically, MK is excellent for a PC action game. Some magazines have criticised the game because it slows down in Local Bus graphics mode. This isn't the case with the finished product though (earlier reviews were probably pre-production copies). The finished version is as fast as the coin-op and wipes the floor with the console versions.

VERDICT

Streetffighter II on PC raised questions about the machine's ability to handle heavy action games. Kombat on a 33mhz 486 PC though, is faster than on the SNES, and it is more than a match for the coin-op if you have Local Bus graphics too. Unlike other conversions, the difficulty level is much harder here and you can't get away with using one move to beat everyone. Admittedly, it's a bit unresponsive at times and fiddly to play with the keys, but it will support two-button joysticks. A fantastic conversion for a PC.

DENIZ AHMET

The PC version is arcade perfect in every way. The opponents are just as fast and the gore is fully intact. But best of all, the opponents now have better intelligence so you can't always win with just one move.



Out Now: Contact Interplay (0865 390029) for information.

Clayfighter

The blob character has som wonderf However, it takes a while t get used

Can a humorous approach to beat-'em-ups be taken seriously?

CLAY TIME

There are eight different and unique characters to play with or against in Clayfighter. So what can they do exactly?

BAD MR FROSTY:
Not very agile, but Frosty can launch a hefty barrage of snowballs at opponents. Strong, but has limited reach.

HELGA:
She's a hefty lass and tends to scream in your ear, which is not a pleasant sensory experience. Occasionally, she'll lunge towards you; mind that helmet!

You'll no doubt remember the Electricity Board's 'Creature Comforts' commercials, with those Aardman created plasticine bears, turtles, parrots, cats and dogs. Yeah? Now, although being animals, they had human like characteristics which made them both funny and believable. So why am I telling you this? Basically, because Clayfighter has very much the same appeal with its pliable characters.

Clayfighter takes the mickey out of beat-'em-ups with its comedy violence. The eight characters you can select for combat cover the most unlikely and mismatched range you could possibly think of. Yet, when you play, it all comes together well.

Point of view

Each character has a range of special moves which gives the game those vital combo possibilities. The controls are the same as Streetfighter

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A very nice character selection scre this. Al very different at first, but in play, th are w

ICKYBOD CLAY:
Pumpkin head blasts you with bits of his soggy head. His arms have an unpredictable reach and may even try to hug you to death. Worst of the lot.

THE BLOB:
Blob can morph into a boot, fist, or hammer and he spits gunge too. When angry will swallow his opponent or chop them in half. Our favourite.

TAFFY:
A piece of candy who looks like a rubber band. As such, Taffy has a long reach and can wind himself up to spin across the screen. Fast, unpredictable but a bit weak.

TINY:
This guy is actually huge, and while limited to an unspectacular dashing punch, spin, and belly splat he's strong and durable, so he's a good all-rounder.

BONKI
No rud Bonke head-b ed nec and un

This is the fighting map. Each character has their own place, and here you see the last lot.

VERDICT

Clayfighter tries to impress, but it's a bit clumsy, which is mainly due to some iffy sprite detection. Essentially, the game doesn't feel right since everyone moves with suspect momentum, and Tiny is stronger than anyone else. On 'easy' you can clock the game in about 15 minutes without a single death, while 'hard' is like level six on Streetfighter II. Also, there are more stages than challengers so you have to fight some characters more than once. Even so, Clayfighter is very funny and enjoyable, just not spectacular.

DENIZ AHMET

som wonderful morphing abilities.
ile t get used to his striking distances.

moves, and each character doesn't necessarily do the same thing with each key. A hard kick by Blob for instance would be a leg sweep by Mr Frosty, so there's quite a lot of player tactics to learn, which increase the game's lastability. Unfortunately, when it comes to the interaction between opponents, something isn't quite right. Unlike Streetfighter II, opponents in Clayfighter don't often react intelligently, and this means you can get away with the unforgivable tactic of relying on one move to kill everyone. On harder settings, all opponents seem to do is block more often so the problem still exists.

In two-player mode Clayfighter is a strong product and players can handicap each other for added lastability.

Streetfighter II it's not, but Clayfighter has tried to offer something different to the genre and that has to be a good thing.

VERDICT

This game has been attracting interest for ages on import mainly because of its graphics. Indeed the backdrops are great, but it's the sprites that grab your attention. I don't think I've seen anything quite as well digitised as is on offer here. Sound is equally excellent, with crazy FX and some excellent vocal effects. The game itself comes as something of a let down. The moves are Streetfighter rip offs, but you don't have much of a feeling of contact and the game is too easy in one player mode. It's fun, but a bit of a disappointment.

RIK SKEWS

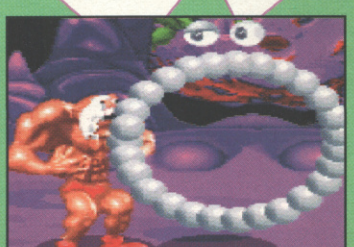
Grabbing opponents is a difficult act to perform, but it drains their energy quickly.

scree this. All characters will seem y, they are well balanced.

Special moves use Streetfighter type controls, so it's easy to get the hang of.

BONKER:
No rude jokes about names here. Bonker slings custard pies and head-butts with his spring mounted neck. His feet are also large and unavoidable. He's fierce.

BLUE SUEDE GOO:
OK, so it's Elvis. Shouts things like 'Wowa momma' to make you laugh while his telescopic hair stabs you senseless. Silly, but a tough opponent.



MR BOSS:
Boss is made from a chain of balls which can stretch and contract into a few shapes. He's a doddle to beat, just stand in the middle and punch quickly.

REVIEW

SNES | by GAMTEK | £44.99

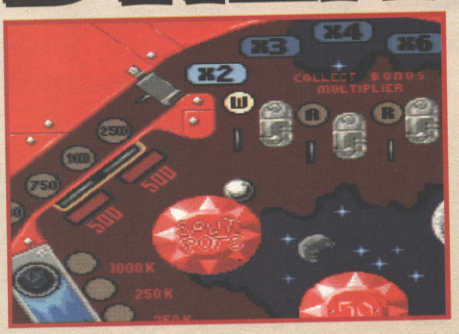
Out March. Contact Gametek (0753 553445) for information.

Play the silver ball in this Amiga-to-SNES conversion!

Follow the arrows to boost the jackpot amount.

Light the three lights to spell Nightmare and get a bonus.

PINBALL DREAMS



Drop down all three top channels for a bonus multiplier.

Bounce the ball between flippers for the best bonuses

Tommy

Pinball Dreams is a cartridge version of that very pastime, minus the sixpences. Converted from the 21st Century Entertainment Amiga version, Pinball Dreams gives you four tables, each with its own special features. You can play on your own or with up to seven friends (of course, if you don't fancy starting up again when you die, you could always choose eight-player mode anyway and get 24 balls to bang about).

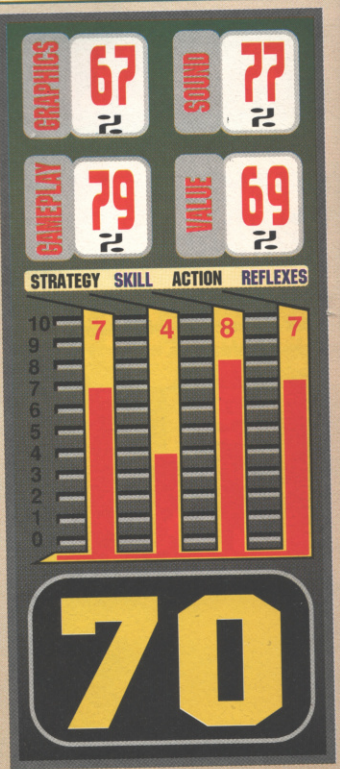
Uncle Ernie

Many features found on real pintables are included, such as jackpots and extra ball bonuses, which come in very handy when you're trying to beat your high score – which, after all, is what the point behind playing pinball is. There's only one other pinball sim available on SNES – Jaki Crush – and that's a bit of a star. How does Pinball Dreams compare?

Twice round the Wild West track nets you a cool million.

FLIP ME, THERE'S FOUR!

Pinball Dreams offers a quartet of pinball treats. Beat Box is based on the pop charts, with the ball being used to push you up the US and European music listings. Nightmare is a spooky affair, and is the best of the four since it has the most features. Steel Wheels takes the player back to the Wild West, with above average gameplay and some good samples, while Ignition is set in space. One feature in the SNES game which doesn't appear in the others is the inclusion of The Munch Bunch – animated characters based on fruit who advertise yogurt – who appear at the start of each game and morph into the pinball. One question – why?



VERDICT

It seems you can't move for pinball sims on console. Take Jaki Crush, – hidden extras all over the place. SNES Dreams, though, skimps on table quality by going for quantity, and it doesn't work. The tables are basic, and the ball doesn't move well at times. If you're a pinball fan who can't find Jaki Crush, Dreams will keep you occupied, but it's a game which could have been a whole lot better if the programmers hadn't stuck so rigidly to the Amiga original. And whoever decided to put The Munch Bunch in should be shot.

PAUL RAND

Out now. Contact 21st Century Entertainment (0235 851533) for information.

PINBALL FANTASIES

The definitive PC pinball simulation has finally arrived

This game should come with a government health warning because once you start playing it, you just can't stop, no matter what happens. A nuclear warhead could land right next to your chair and you'd still be glued to that screen trying desperately to beat your score. Yup, it's that addictive.

Pinball Dreams was 21st Century's first attempt at creating a pinball sim, and it was pretty damned good. Pinball Fantasies is even better. The sound is miles better, the tables are more interesting and the scrolling is much, much smoother this time around.

Don't get stuck in the pits in Speed Devils.

You'll need more than a cheesy grin to win the Billion Dollar Game Show.

All the tables are fun to play, though Partyland is my fave.

Multiball?

The controls are fairly standard: the shift or control keys act as the flippers, space tilts the table and the cursor key fires the ball. Unlike Dreams, you can now alter the tilt of the table, the smoothness of the scrolling and the screen resolution. Normally each table is three screens high and scrolls with the ball, but by changing the resolution from normal to high you can alter it so that the table is two screens high and you can see more of it at once. It's an easy game to play, though scoring the big points takes practice. The only thing that's missing is a multiball feature. ●

Go ballistic

There are four different tables to try. Partyland is all about fun fairs, big dippers and making yourself sick; Speed Devils has a race driving theme; Billion Dollar Game Show is loud, tacky and has more ramps than is commonly decent on a pinball table and Stones and Bones is similar to the Nightmare table in Pinball Dreams, with lots of spooky graveyard action.

Loads of ramps and targets make Partyland a lively and challenging table.

Unlock the Tower for big points in Stones and Bones.

VERDICT

Pinball Fantasies is the best pinball simulation I've seen on the PC. The ball and flipper action is pretty accurate, and there's a great selection of tables. It's both smoother and faster than 21st Century's previous effort, Pinball Dreams, and runs well even on a humble 20MHz 386SX. You might think that £37.99 is a lot to pay for a pinball game, but you'll more than get your money's worth and it's the sort of game you can keep coming back to. This game is hellishly addictive – you'll play it until your fingers bleed.

GARY LORD

THERE IS ONLY THE ONE

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REVIEW

MEGA DRIVE | by ELECTRONIC ARTS | £44.99

Out now. Contact Electronic Arts (0753 549442) for information.

Hang on to your hat (or cap), and the nearest car, as you skitch through the streets of America...

OK, so I'm eleventh, but I've got eight kilometres to play (as Henry Kelly would say) 'Catch up'. Checking your rear-view mirror is a good idea, otherwise you end up, well sort of like this really.

Would you venture into the middle of a busy city road, grab hold of a passing car, truck, or Number 7 bus, and propel yourself through the rush hour traffic while wearing a pair of rollerblades (Yank equivalent of roller skates)? Well no, you wouldn't would you.

But in sunny Cali-forn-I-A. (where such an activity is known as skitchin') they would, but luckily you can enjoy the thrill of the aforementioned sport without running the risk of ending up as flat as a waif-like supermodel's chest with the help of EA's Road Rash clone – Skitchin'.

Win your races and you can afford to replenish your skatin' gear from Honest Joe (or Eugene as he's known, probably) here.

Once you've skitched, gather some speed and then let go!

When you come first, which is easy to do in the first few levels, your sprite performs this irritating little dance.

Baby rash

The principle difference though is the rollerblades have replaced the motorbike, and to accelerate past your opponents you have to skitch on to passing traffic. This manoeuvre is tricky, since you have to check your rear-view mirror (built into your helmet) and at the optimum moment press button A and move towards the vehicle you want a lift off. The idea is to finish the race in the first five, the higher you finish the more cash you receive, which comes in handy for paying for new skating gear and hospital bills.

As in Road Rash your competitors are thoroughly unscrupulous, and if you're skitchin' the same vehicle as them they will try and give you a discourteous shove. The best way out of such a scenario is to slingshot yourself forwards out of trouble. Remember to try and jump any ramps that appear as extra cash can be earned this way, plus it adds an extra element of gameplay, ie it's more fun.

SOMETHING'S GOTTA HOLD OF MY CAR

Now the beauty of skitchin' is that, unlike the similar sport of hitchin' (method of transport favoured by the financially challenged), you are not at the mercy of a discerning driver who hopefully might pick you up. Here you do the picking up and there are different vehicles you can attach yourself to; your common-or-garden sedan, a tricky to get hold of motorbike and the worth-loads-of-bonus-cash-but-very-illegal police car.

VERDICT

Has EA released, albeit covertly, Road Rash 3? Well yes and no. The principal's the same but the method is quite different. The crux of the gameplay is to master the control method, which can be fairly tricky. The levels don't offer a great deal of variety – cars get faster and more difficult to hold on to and your fellow skitchers more violent, plus the scenery is rather lacklustre. A novel approach to an existing formula which will hook you in and propel you through the levels fairly briskly.

GARY LORD

REVIEW

GAME GEAR | by ACCLAIM | £29.99

Out now. Contact Acclaim (071-344 5000) for information.

BART vs the WORLD

Bart's back on the case but not to solve anything, just to shut it as he's off round the world

Crikey! Bart Simpson's won a Krusty the Clown art contest. And he's won a pretty decent prize too. It's a family Krusty the Clown Treasure Hunt trip round the world. Sounds too good to be true huh? Unfortunately yes, because the contest was fixed by sponsor and judge C. Montgomery Burns, Springfield's dodgy nuclear power plant owner, so he could rid himself of the troublesome Simpsons once and for all.

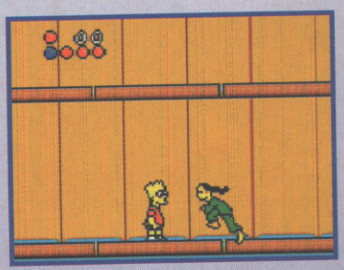
Treasure hunt

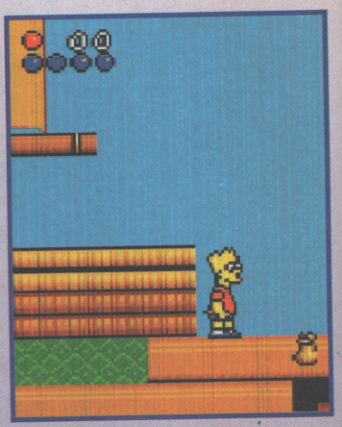
Burns has been losing millions of dollars ever since he hired Bart's dad, Homer Simpson, to work at the plant. Burns has placed a different member of his family at each stop on the tour to cut short the Simpsons' fun. Despite these problems Bart is intent on getting through his global treasure hunt because waiting for him at the end of it all is the grand prize – a guest appearance on the Itchy & Scratchy Cartoon Show.

The interceptor

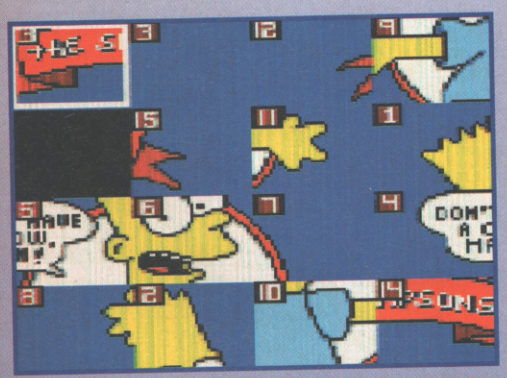
The platform-based action takes place over four world areas, China, Egypt, Hollywood and the North Pole. Bart can defend himself with a replenishable supply of firecracker balls and can also collect souvenirs for extra lives. Each level also contains an art object which, although not essential, if collected will reward Bart with a special section at the end of the game, should he get them all. As well as the platform levels, each world area has a couple of single screen puzzles to complete, and a small scrolling level which ends with Bart having to confront one of Burns' relatives.

Find the map icon and you'll enter this sub-level. At the end of this is one of Burns' cronies.

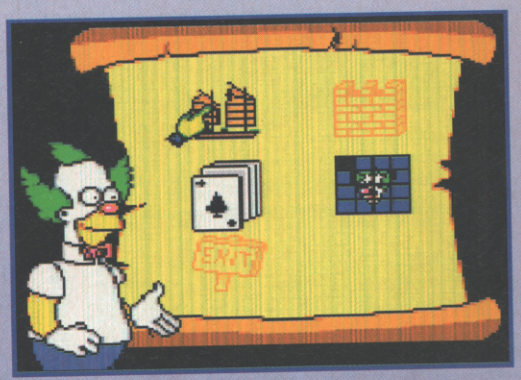




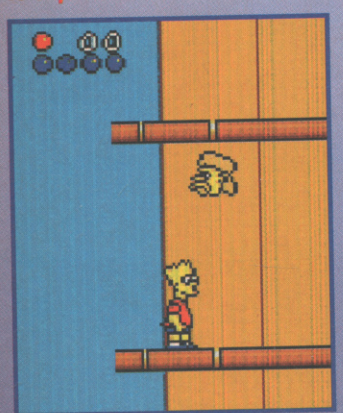
If you gather up these little thingies you can replenish your firecracker balls supply.



Another of the sub-games. I don't think I need to explain this do !!



Gameplay is fairly boring because there's very little on-screen at any one time.

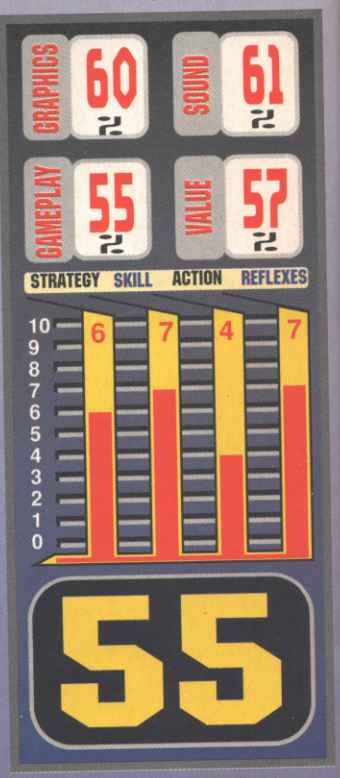


Pick these up to be invincible for a short time.

VERDICT

It doesn't say much when the sub-games are better than the main one does it? Well, that's the situation in Bart. There's loads of brilliant puzzle games involving lots of strategy, skill and reflexes. Presentation in general is smart too, but it's the main platform part of the game that's a disappointment. It's not that bad, it's just drab and uninspired. There's little in the way of baddies to encounter and never more than a couple of them on the screen at a time. Unless you're a giant fan of The Simpsons there's not much here.

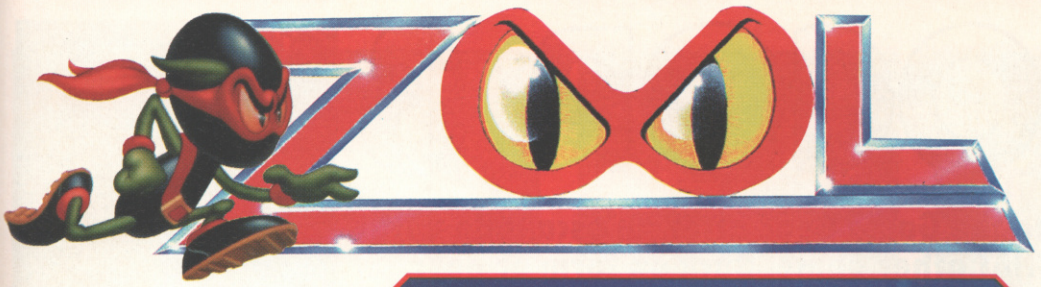
RIK SKEWS



REVIEW

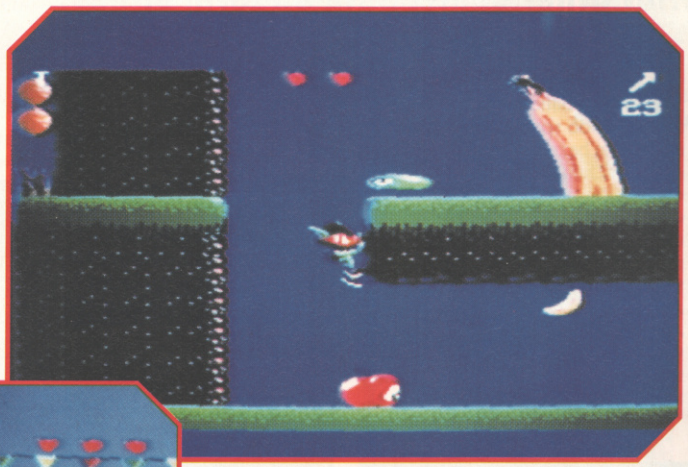
GAME GEAR | by GREMLIN | £29.99

Out now. Contact Gremlin (0742 753 423) for information

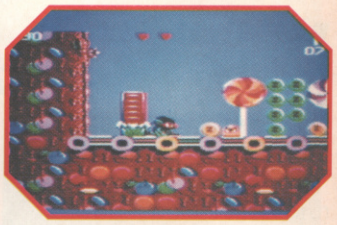


Here's Maxie the Robot the metallic guardian from Toy World.

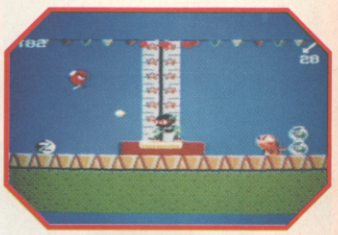
Remarkably, Zool's found another format that he hasn't saved the world on. Not for long though...



Zool can grip walls, which is dead useful as it stops him falling off them, which is the problem you have with some other platform characters.



Collect these green Zs for some extra points.



You can alter the amount of lives available to you from one to five.

Look hard enough down your local shops and you'll probably find leisure products bearing the Zool logo. A nice little earner is Zool. Still, Gremlin deserves it, having created a computer megastar. Now he's turned his attention to Sega's dinky handheld. Zool's mission is the same as it has been on any other format but what the heck, here's a quick recap of the story if you're new to him.

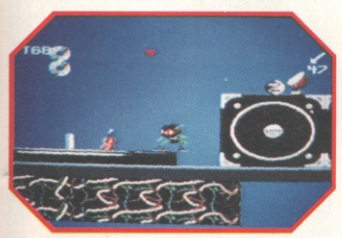
Zool can collect an icon allowing him to jump higher, so there's no need for him to climb walls.

Cocoa time

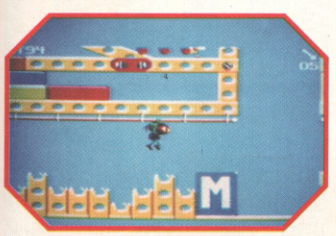
It's platform time once again, as you guide Zool through five worlds; Sweet, Music, Fruit, Toy and Fairground. Each level is full of all the things you've come to expect in a platform game: baddies, bonuses and end-of-level beasties. Killing baddies will not only increase your score but if you're quick you can grab the heart that's sometimes released and keep your strength up.

Milky digestive

Each level is sub-divided into sub-zones, all of which are played against the clock. The game also features plenty of hidden rooms, bonuses and all those other things that you'd expect to find in a platform game these days (apart from Sonic and Mario of course!). And there's plenty of well spaced restart points to avoid any of those feelings of déjà vu.



See that 'Z' symbol? Run over it 'cos it's a restart point.



Hey Zool, it's no good 'hanging around', there's a strict time limit don't you know.

VERDICT

Bar a couple of levels missing, Zool on the Game Gear is much what you'd expect. In other words it's a solid and challenging platformer with decent graphics and those wonderfully irritating tunes and sound FX. Zool on Amiga is excellent, but on console it doesn't quite beat the formidable competition. However, there's been few decent platform games on the Game Gear recently (ignoring Cool Spot of course), so if they are your particular cup of hot chocolate you will enjoy this distinctive game.

RIK SKEWS

REVIEW

GAME GEAR | by ACCLAIM | £24.99

Out Now. Contact Acclaim (071 344 5000) for information.

ROBOCOP 3

Step between each ball incredibly carefully. There isn't a pattern to learn here.

Old tin head returns to the Game Gear after an escapade with the Terminator in THAT other game. Back on form or not?

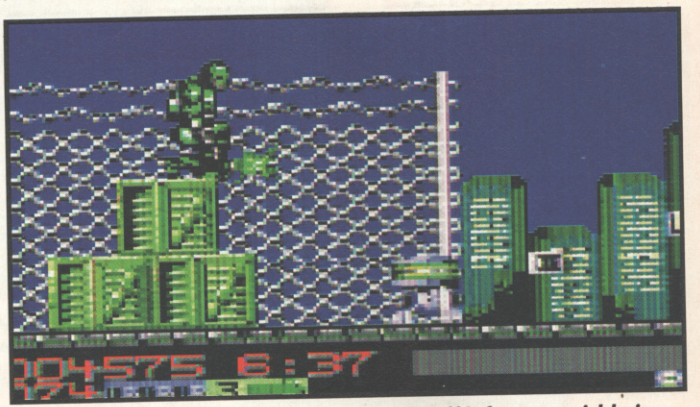
Well it's 1999 and the neighbourhood has gone bonkers. Street gangs are trashing the area known as Cadillac Heights and someone needs to do something. In other words, it sounds like a good plot for a Robocop game.

Now Robo must be marched (because he can't run) through six missions, grouped into three phases, which ultimately take you to the showdown at OCP headquarters.

Get loaded

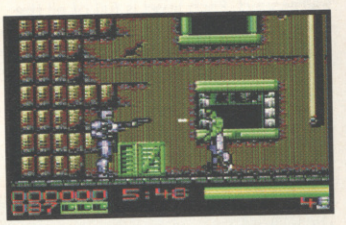
The first thing to do is go to the options menu and give yourself the maximum number of lives and continues. You'll need them since Robocop 3 is way too difficult. The problem is that the Robo sprite moves slowly, and all the hazards come at you thick and fast. Quite often this also means coping with attacks from three different directions, which is tough in the extreme. Such problems are supposed to be compensated for by the fact you have four weapons available, but you have to find them first. And the thing is that better weapons will demand more ammo. Hence, the three-way pistol uses up your ammunition three times faster.

When right up against a baddie who is ducking, Robo also has a worrying tendency not to be able to kill them. Yet, the overriding grievance in this is a lack of variety which most players should spot instantly. ●



You snuff it far too quickly in this game. Those little squares on the right are power-ups.

This baddie takes a few shots to kill if you're only using a basic gun. Of course, you can always jump over him.



Always blast baddies from a distance. A bug in the game means you can't hit them when touching. It's best not to stand up when shooting either.

VERDICT

This is a simple game with predictable elements, but what lets it down is Robocop himself. Firstly, he walks like he's wearing high heels, and secondly he animates nothing like his movie cousin. All this is due to poor animation, and the lame graphics. Looking at this as a Mega Drive conversion, it's faithful, but unfortunately that was crap in the first place. The difficulty level is quite unforgiving and there are no restart points, which doesn't please anyone. I'll admit it's fun to begin with, but is too flawed to be playable.

DENIZ AHMET

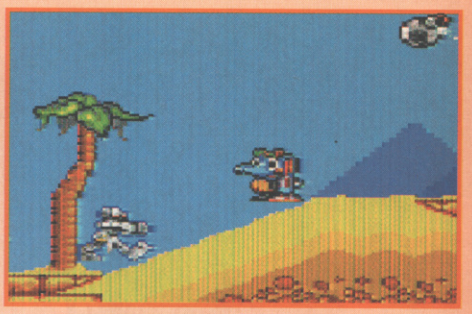
REVIEW

GAME GEAR ▶ by CODE MASTERS ▶ £21.99

Out In March. Contact Code Masters (0926 814132) for information.

CJ runs into this speedy soldier boss at the end of the England zone. Three easy bombs finish him off.

Beware the typical Englishman's deadly flying brief case.



Hey, Egypt! You can tell it's Egypt because the screen is full of pyramids and mummies.

CJ- ELEPHANT FUGITIVE

Who can she be, this dusky maiden of The Mysterious East?

Falling from great heights presents no problems to our trunky pal, who comes fully equipped with his rainbow-striped umbrella-parachute.

Cute Jumbo comes jumping, cavorting, comically jiving... er, that's enough C and J words. Let's just get on with the review...

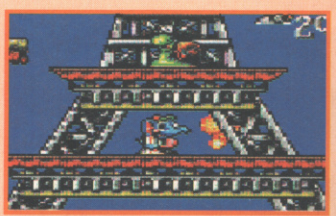
Zoos, yeah? They're, like, a bad thing, because it's just not natural to capture wild animals and keep them locked up in cages for people to gawp at. Well, if you think so, Columbus Jumbo the baby elephant would certainly agree with you. There he was, locked up in a zoo in rainy, snowy, windy England and homesick for the savannahs of Africa. Enough was enough, and disguised in a stolen baseball jacket (XL size of course) CJ has made his bid for freedom.

Cosmopolitan elephant

Lacking an air ticket, CJ has to walk (and jump) from London, through France, across the Alps, south to Rome, then across the Mediterranean and down through Egypt, before finally reaching his herd in Kenya. That works out to 18 levels of platform-type action, throughout which CJ is beset by elephant-hating armies of pigeons, rats, the Mafia, yodelling girls, mummies and witch doctors.

Loxodonata Africana

Fortunately, CJ is able to protect himself by blowing peanut projectiles out of his trunk, a couple of shots being enough to cause foes to explode into a pile of bonus-points fruit. Better still, the diminutive Loxodonta Africana also carries a bag full of bouncing bombs which are even more effective when it comes to dynamiting the enemies of elephantkind out of the way.

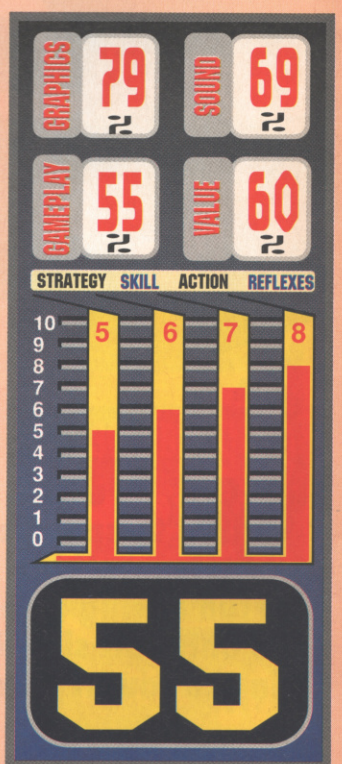


Snails? The Eiffel Tower? But of course – it's Paris!

VERDICT

There's hardly any originality on display here, but what really crocks CJ: Elephant Fugitive are annoying features like his peanut-firing ability, which isn't worth spit, because he shoots a quarter second after you've pressed the fire button. Also, the fact that the baddies sometimes take three hits to kill and other times one is confusing. Surprise deaths are common, which is presumably why the programmers give you nine lives to play with, but I'm afraid they just prolong the agony. Bring back Micro Machines.

GARY LORD



ARCADE ACTION

RIDGE RACER

BY NAMCO
RACING
1 PLAYER
£3 PER PLAY

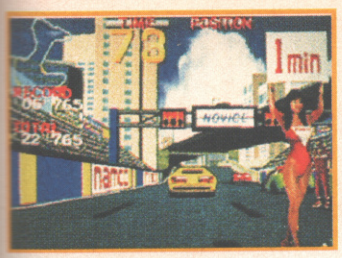
RIDGE RACER

You've heard all the talk. You've perhaps seen a couple of screen-shots. You might even have read a bit of blurb by some one who looked at the machines for 20 seconds. But CVG, as usual, was the magazine invited to spend a whole afternoon playing not only Sega's sequel to Virtua Racing (see page 86) but also the only full-size Ridge Racer coin-op in the country, before it was even opened to the public!

You'll never make it with only one second to go.

Those with their heads stuck in the sand for the past six months will know little about Ridge Racer, the arcade machine sporting revolutionary graphics and a top-of-the-range car: yes it's an actual Mazda MX5 sports car which you sit in and drive! That's the version we've been playing, costing a whacking £3 a time! Yes it's expensive, we know, but when you take into account that the machine costs – wait for it – ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND

Here's the course layout for Ridge Racer. Actually, this is split into three to cater for all the different tracks.



You're ready to rock on the starting block – that girl had better get out of the way soon!

Slow down on the tight corners, otherwise you'll run the car right into the crash barrier.

POUNDS – then you can imagine how long it would take to recoup that kind of cash were it 50 pence a throw.

There are four levels to tackle in Ridge Racer – Novice, Advance, Expert and Time Trial – and two different courses to drive on: which one you attempt depends upon the level you select. While the first three levels are difficulty settings – basically trickier-to-pass cars and the like – the Time Trial option puts you on the open road and lets you thrash round the course, attempting to beat the current fastest finishing time.

smoothly as you could imagine, and the cars and roadside objects are equally stunning – they don't look quite as real as some would have you believe, but they're not far off.

Sound, too, is brilliant, and because you're enclosed in what is almost a big box with a car inside, the noises resonate around you as opposed to blasting out past your ears, making for an infinitely more realistic experience.

Real Racing

By using System 22 graphics technology Namco has managed to make the courses highly detailed. They scroll as

Graphics the likes of which you've never seen are what make Ridge Racer so unique.

There's nothing like a quiet drive by the seaside. And this is nothing like it.

Coming up to the suspension bridge, there's a tight bend which can scupper you.

IS THIS THE ULTIMATE IN ARCADE REALISM OR WHAT?

Here it is – the only full-size Ridge Racer coin-op currently in Great Britain, seen here being put through its paces by CVG Ed Paul Rand at its test site at Fun Land in London's Trocadero. Costing a thumping ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND POUNDS, this version

of the machine incorporates a real Mazda MX5 sports car, which is wired to the projection screen and which you 'drive', using all the actual features of a real car – accelerator, brake, clutch – even the radio and the various dials work! For the price Namco is

charging, you expect something a bit special – and you aren't disappointed. The huge screen fills the whole windscreen, arcing round so that, wherever you look, you can see what's going on around you. An amazing machine.

VERDICT

Ridge Racer is far and away the most realistic arcade game ever seen, but it does have its drawbacks, and they do take the shine off what is otherwise a superb (if expensive) ride. The screen can be relatively devoid of cars at times and the sensation of speed really isn't there when you're blasting along at 160km/h, although when you enter into a sideways skid it really does feel as if you could total that expensive car if you're not careful. Plus the car seems to lack any hydraulics. Still, this is an experience which everyone should try at least once, if only to get a look at those gorgeous graphics and sit in the Mazda!

PAUL RAND

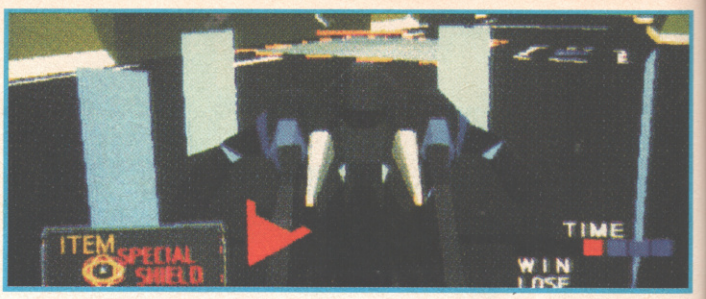
GRAPHICS 97

SOUND 95

GAMEPLAY 80

OVERALL 80

ARCADE ACTION



CYBER SLED

CYBER SLED

BY NAMCO
BEAT-'EM-UP
1-2 PLAYERS

Namco turns the clock back with its latest blaster, inspired by the age old Battlezone coin-up

Hands up! Yeah, hands up all those arcade veterans who, like my good self, remember a cracking arcade game called Battlezone? Well if you do then Cyber Sled, a maze-type battle affair set over twelve, 3D polygon worlds, will remind you of the former game's control method in that you have two joysticks to control movement.

The objective is to battle, in your cyber sled, against other players (or computer controlled opponents).

There's also an interior view available for experts.

Cybermorph

There's all the usual power-ups and stuff to find to give you an advantage over your enemy, including extra missiles, a special shield, extra shield power, and a computer to jam enemy missiles and radar. There's two distinct viewpoints on offer.

CyberJobe

Beginners can view the battlefield from behind their cyber sled, while more advanced players can use the viewpoint button for a more difficult, but realistic first-person perspective. Each of the six available sleds has its own strengths and weaknesses; so choose one, strap yourself in and go for it. Just remember not to overheat those guns!

If you want a comparison I'd say this is like Battlezone.

Each competitor has their own strengths and weaknesses so choose someone to suit you.

GRAPHICS	82
SOUND	76
GAMEPLAY	84
OVERALL	82

VERDICT

Yeah, I like Cyber Sled, and t's managed to sneak up without the usual hype. The graphics are clean, detailed and reminiscent of the Atari style and they create a convincing and thoroughly believable futuristic atmosphere, without resorting to the usual dark and murky cyberpunk style. Like most things in life, Cyber Sled is most fun when played with a friend. You get seriously tense flying around the maze avoiding enemy gunfire as you desperately search for the missiles needed to kill your opponent. An enjoyable coin-op, and it makes a welcome change for a game to rely on gameplay rather than some new technical advancement.

RIK SKEWS

IT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD
FUN LAND
THE TROCADERO, PICCADILLY CIRCUS, LONDON

Here's a chart of the most played coin-ops at Fun Land...

1. RIDGE RACER
Namco

2. VIRTUA FIGHTING
(Sega)

3. SUZUKA 8 HOURS II
(Namco)

4. ALIEN³
(Namco)

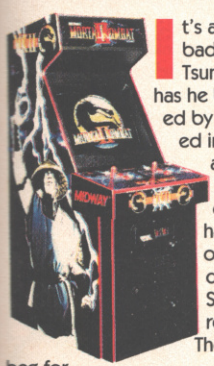
5. MORTAL KOMBAT II
(Midway)

MORTAL KOMBAT II

MORTAL KOMBAT

BY MIDWAY
BEAT-'EM-UP
1-2 PLAYERS

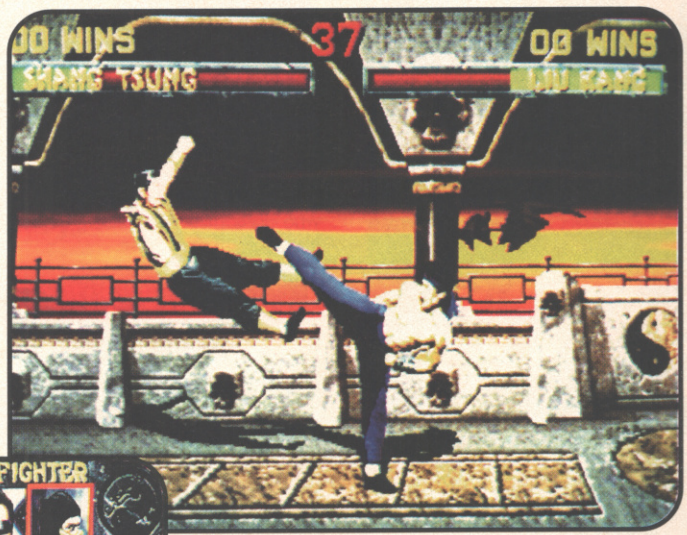
It's here! The only true rival to Streetfighter II returns in a sequel that bites the head off the original



It's a bad time for bad guy Shang Tsung. Not only has he been humiliated by being defeated in battle, he's also got the apparent death of Goro hanging heavy on his shoulders. Now Shang Tsung's returned to The Outworld to beg forgiveness from the Jungle Book sound-a-like Shao Kahn, supreme ruler of the Mortal Kombat battle arena. Shao Kahn's obviously a Nineties kind of guy and promptly forgives Shang Tsung.

Together they conceive a new and even more diabolical plan to lure the Earth's mightiest warriors to a tournament where the balance between good and evil must once again be decided. Apart from Kano and Sonya, all the favourites have returned along with a whole host of new characters.

Major Jackson Briggs (Jax) is the leader of a top US Special Forces Unit while Baraka has been recruited by Shao Kahn from a nomadic race of mutants who live in the wastelands of The Outworld. Two sisters, Kitana and Mileena, have also entered the fray along with Kung Lao (who has a steel rimmed hat that is reminiscent of Oddjob's head wear from Goldfinger). Reptile and Shang Tsung also return, but this time you can choose them as characters.



With all the specials and combos on offer why bother with the normal moves?

Meet the gang in all their gruesome glory.

Shang Tsung doesn't appear to be having much luck in any of these pictures does he?

Scaly reptile reappears in Mortal Kombat II and this time you can control him.

Lui Kang's excellent kick is one of the few original moves that remain.

Bossa Nova

Boss wise there's Kintano who is reminiscent of Goro and also Shao Kahn himself. Apparently Kano and Sonya are also in the game somewhere, as are all manner of other secret bits and pieces including about a zillion or so special moves which you'll find out more about in this month's CheatMode (see pages 88-90).

VERDICT

With Mortal Kombat II, Midway has got a machine which is better than Capcom's classic in many areas. Sound is especially stunning thanks to a Digital Compression System which plops all over Q-Sound. Unlike most of the all-singing no-dancing games about today, Mortal Kombat II backs up the impressive audiovisuals with excellent long lasting gameplay. If there's one fault it's that some of the special moves are ridiculously difficult to pull off (by my maths one of Raiden's fatality moves requires 11 combinations), but all in all I reckon this is as good as Super Streetfighter II. Your ball Capcom.

RIK SKEWS

GRAPHICS	94%
SOUND	93%
GAMEPLAY	92%
OVERALL	93%

ARCADE ACTION

Race side by side in the atmospheric multiplayer cabinets...

...so if you lose you can always thump your opponents.

VIRTUA FORMULA

BY SEGA
BEAT-'EM-UP
1-2 PLAYERS
£3 PER PLAY

VIRTUA FORMULA

Sega overtakes the opposition and then goes up a gear with its latest high performer...

When we get the big coin-ops, do we get the BIG coin-ops! Not content with grabbing THE review of the only full-size Ridge Racer coin-op in the country, we also go one better and review the only Virtua Formula coin-op there is in Europe, which has just been introduced to the Fun Land arcade in London's Trocadero!

Get ready for what is the ultimate arcade driving experience at the moment.

Race 'n' chase

Shunting aside the massive Galaxians 3 cabinet, because it takes up so much room, Virtua Formula is, surprisingly enough, the sequel to Virtua Racing. Sort of. The game itself is the same as before. Jump into your racing car and burn around any one of three courses, each picked out in ultra-fast polygons, with the object being to beat the other racer (it's a two-player cabinet) and finish the race within the allotted time limit. You have the choice of either automatic or semi-automatic gear changing – choose semi-automatic and you change gear by nudging either of the finger-controlled gear switches attached to the steering wheel, just like you can with a real F1 car. And as well as the other human racer (if you are playing a two-player game), the coin-op throws up some pretty stiff opposition as well, who don't think twice about slamming you off the course.

Hydraulic hi-jinks

Not much difference, you might think. And game wise, you would probably be right. Cabinet-wise, however, it's a whole new ball game. Not only is Virtua Formula now a four-player game, but now the cars are hydraulically controlled and the back axle actually slips out when you skid!

There is also an on-air camera facility that flicks through each racer in turn, showing his or her facial expressions on a monitor positioned above the cabinet (which, incidentally, costs around £250,000, according to the people at Fun Land – blimey!) and the four different driver views as seen in the original.

Formula doesn't have the drop-dead stunning graphics seen in Ridge Racer, but it's got the vital ingredient that makes or breaks games of this genre – a heart-pumping sense of speed. Take it for a spin as soon as you can. ●

Fun Land is the only place you can play Virtua at the moment.

VERDICT

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PAUL RAND

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CHEAT MODE

Bumper, that's the word to describe this month's CheatMode, and we're not talking about car fenders here. We mean 'bumper' as in BIG. So without any further ado (apart from to say send all your cheats, hints and tips to CVG CheatMode, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU) we'll let you feast your eyes on this month's cheats...

MORTAL KOMBAT II

ARCADE – MKII

Here it is! None of the half-finished, no good, good for nothing codes that some mags seem to have published. No way, this is the definitive round-up of all the Kombateer's moves from the arcade version. Thanks to everyone who wrote or phoned in, but especially Ben Linney (and his fax machine) and Daniel Boutros for managing to get there first.

One important thing to remember is that to do the Friendship or Babetality moves don't use either punch button in the last round!

KUNG LAO

Looking like Oddjob from Goldfinger, Kung Lao is a nasty piece of work make no mistake. Blessed with amazing control and technique you'll not want to be on the receiving end of his razor sharp hat (unless you like being chopped up into itsy bitsy teeny weeny pieces that is). Use the Spin Shield on players trapped in a corner for ultimate cheese potential.

Hat Toss B, F, LP.
Teleport D, D, U.
Spin Shield Hold Blk, U, U, Release Blk, LK

Pit and Spikes F, F, F, HP.
Babetality, B, B, F, F, LP.
Friendship B, B, F, F, HK.

Fatality 1 Hold Blk, F, F, F, Release LK.
Fatality 2 B, B, F, F, D, D, HK+Blk+LK.
Fatality 3 Hold Blk, U, U, LK+HK.
Fatality 4 Hold Blk, U, U, U, U, LP+HP.

SHANG TSUNG

Shang Tsung's clearly done a 'Neighbours' and been replaced with another actor.

1 Skull B,B, HP.
2 Skulls B, B, F, HP.
3 Skulls B, B, F, F, HP.

Babetality B, F, D, HK.
Friendship Hold Blk, B, B, B, D, B, Release Blk, HK.

Fatality 1 Hold Blk, HK, HK, HK, HK, HK.
Fatality 2 Hold Blk U, D, U, Release Blk, LK.
Fatality 3 Hold HK for three seconds.

To morph Shang Tsung into other characters:

Johnny Cage B, B, D, LP.
Scorpion Hold Blk, U, U.
Sub Zero F, D, F, HP.
Kung Lao B, D,B, HK.
Reptile Hold Blk, U, U, D, HP.
Kitana Blk, Blk, Blk.
Baraka Hold Blk, D, D, LP+LK+Blk.
Lui Kang B, B, F, F, Blk.
Raiden D, F, B, LK.
Jax D, F, B, LK.
Mileena Hold HP for three seconds.

KITANA

Kitana and Mileena are twin sisters (in other words they're played by the same actor). Her fans are something best avoided by foes and allow for excellent combo potential in true Super Streetfighter II tradition.

Air Stun B, B, B, HP.
Fan Throw B, B, (LP+HP).
Sonya Jump D, DB, B, HP.

Pit and Spikes F, D, F, HK.
Babetality D, D, D, LK.
Friendship D, D, D, U, LK.

Fatality 1 Blk, Blk, Blk, HK.
Fatality 2 Hold LK, F, F, D, F.
Fatality 3 F, F, F, B, B, B, LK.

RAIDEN

Raiden's back and with all his old moves too. Not only that but he's been blessed with a rather dangerous electrifiying grab.

Charge B, B, F.
Teleport D, D, U.
Shock Grab Hold HP for three seconds.
Lightning D, DF, L, LP.

Pit and Spikes Hold Blk, U, U, U, Release Blk, HP.
Babetality D, D, U, HK.
Friendship D, B, F, HK.

Fatality 1 F, F, D, B, F, HP
Fatality 2 Hold LK for four seconds, Release LK, Blk+LK.
Fatality 3 Hold LK, D, D, F, F, Release LK, LK, LK, LK, LK, LK.

BARAKA

It'll take more than skin cream to make Baraka's complexion as smooth as a baby's butt, still combat wise he's a real stunner; be careful that his long blade doesn't slice you into mincemeat.

Ginsu Chop B, B, B, LP.
Whirlwind D, DB, B, LK+HK.
Fireball D, DB, B, HP.
Blade Swipe B+HP.

Babetality F, F, F, HK.
Friendship Hold Blk, U, U, F, F, HK.

Fatality 1 Hold Blk, B, B, B, release HP.
Fatality 2 B, F, D, F, LP.
Fatality 3 D, F, B, D, F, HK+LK.

REPTILE

He's lean, he's mean and he's a rather unfashionable shade of green wouldn't you say? Yes, he's the reptile and unlike the first game he doesn't have the moves of Scorpion and Sub-Zero.

Slide DB+LK+LP+Blk
Venom F, F, HP
Bomb B, B, HP+LP
Invisibility Hold Blk, U,U, D, Release Blk + HP

Pit and Spikes D, D, F, F, Blk
Babetality D, B, B, LK
Friendship B, B, D, LK

Fatality 1 B, B, D, LP

MILEENA

Mileena, not only does she have some schwing potential, but she also knows how to deal with unwanted come ons. Just check out her well impressive speed which aids her to cut down her opponents. Use this to your advantage against the other slower players. Her sai allows for good combo moves too.

Sai Throw Hold HP for three seconds.
Roll B, B, D, HK.
Teleport Kick F, B, LK.

Pit and Spikes F, D, F, LK.
Babetality D, D, D, HK.
Friendship D, D, D, U, HK.

Fatality 1 F, B, F, LP.
Fatality 2 Blk, HK, HK.
Fatality 3 B, B, B, F, HK.
Fatality 4 Hold HK for three seconds.

SCORPION

The arch rival to Sub Zero is back, looking like he just wants to rave all night. All of his moves are decent but nothing compares to the teleport which allows him to attack twice in the air.

Teleport D, DB, B, LP
Spear B, B, LP
Air Throw Blk while attacking in the air
Leg Trip D, DB, B, LK

Pit and Spikes D, D, F, F, Blk
Babetality D, B, B, HK

Friendship B, B, D, HK

Fatality 1 Hold Blk, U, U, Release Blk, HP
Fatality 2 Hold Blk, D, D, U, U, Release Blk, HP
Fatality 3 Hold HP, D, F, F, F, Release HP

CHEAT MODE

ARCADES

MORTAL KOMBAT II

JACKSON BRIGGS (JAX)

Jax has more cheese combos than Burger King. Watch out 'cos these energy sapping grabs can be done after most moves.

Air Blade D, DB, B, HK.
Earthquake Hold LK for four seconds.
Grab F, F, LP.

Babetality Hold Blk, D, U, D, U, LK.
Friendship D, D, U, U, LK

Fatality 1 Hold LP, F, F, F, F, Release LP.
Fatality 2 Blk, Blk, Blk, Blk, LP.

SUB ZERO

He's got the least moves, but who cares when they're as good as this. Check out the excellent ground freezing ice puddle.

Slide D+LP+LK+Blk.
Freeze D, DF, F, LP.
Puddle D, DB, B, LK.

Pit and Spikes F, D, F, F, HP.
Babality D, B, B, HK.
Friendship B, B, D, LK+HK.

Fatality 1 F, F, D, F, F, HP.
Fatality 2 Hold Blk, F, F, B, B, Release Blk, HP+LP.
Fatality 3 (1st) F, F, D, HK.
Fatality 3 (2nd) F, D, F, F, HP.

LUI KANG

Everyone's favourite character is back and this time he's got some decent fatality moves too!

Low Fireball F, F, LP.
High Fireball F, F, HP.
Flying Kick F, F, HK.
Bicycle Kick Hold LK for five seconds.

Pit and Spikes D, B, F, F, LK.
Babality D, D, F, B, LK.
Friendship F, B, B, B, LK.

Fatality 1 D, F, B, B, HK.
Fatality 2 F, DF, D, DB, B.
Fatality 3 D, D, T, D, T, D, B, HP.

JOHNNY CAGE

The arrogant poser from Hollywood is back and looks meaner than ever. Watch out for his Streetfighter like dragon punch.

Shadow Kick B, F, LK.
Shadow Leap B, D, B, HP.
Low Fireball D, DF, F, LP.
High Fireball D, DB, B, HP.
Ball Breaker LP+Blk.

Pit and Spikes D, D, D, HK.
Babality B, B, B, HK.
Friendship D, D, D, HK.

Fatality 1 D, D, F, F, LP.
Fatality 2 F, F, D, U.
Fatality 3 D, D, D, T, T, D, T, HP.
3 Head Fatality F, F, D, U, D+LP+LK+Blk.

SECRET CHARACTERS

JADE – On first round before you get to a question mark, beat your opponent using any kick, but without blocking.

SMOKE – Watch for a digitised picture of one of the programmers to appear at bottom left and quickly pull down and press start.

PONG- Fancy a game of the arcade classic? Then 'simply' reach Battle 250!

AMIGA

ZOOL 2

Office opinion is divided on whether this is 'excellent' or simply 'good', but whatever your opinion you'd have to agree that some of the levels are labyrinthinely huge, which isn't easy for anyone to say. To skip through levels at will, type in BUMBLEBEE on the options screen and when playing the game simply hit RETURN to skip a level. Simple huh?

MEGA DRIVE

ROBOCOP VS TERMINATOR

You can't really go wrong with this if you're after a big chunky shoot-'em-up. Still if you're picky about which weapon you trash the enemy with then try this weapon select. Pause the game and press: B, A, C, C,C, A, B, A, C, C, C, A, B. If it works you should hear a burst of machine-gun fire. Unpause and press A, B and C and UP or DOWN to change the Terminator's weapon.

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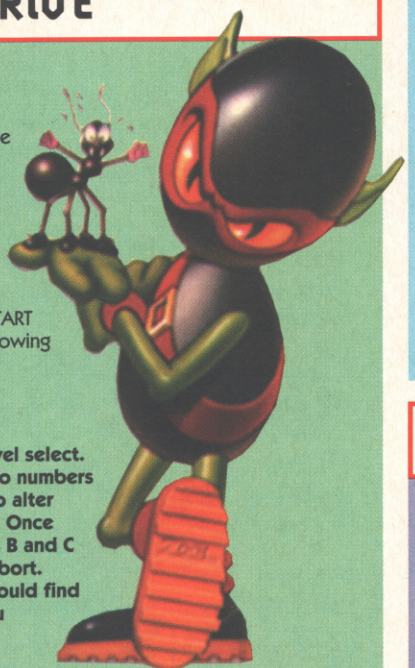
Images Apr

CHEAT MODE

MEGA DRIVE

ZOOL



Blimey, I wish I'd thought up the idea of this ant, sorry I mean ninja, from the Nth dimension, but as Nirvana once said, 'Oh well, Nevermind'. Anyway this list of cheats will make all you Zoolies happier people, believe me. When punching in these cheats hold down the START button while you press the following combinations:

D, U, L, L, A, R, D: Extra life

C, R, A, B, B, A, L, L, A, D: Level select. Release start and the first two numbers are alterable. Change them to alter the world and level numbers. Once you've selected a level hit A, B and C together. The game should abort. Restart the game and you should find yourself on the level that you selected.

R, A, D, A, R, B, L, U, R: Rewards you with 240 energy points (although you'll only be able to see three). This will also set the timer to 999. That's all folks.

SNES

THE LAWNMOWER MAN

Going against tradition of turning good films into mediocre games those talented perkins at the Sales Curve produced an excellent game out of a mediocre film.

Anyway enough of this idle banter. To access the cheat mode, start the game, pause it, and type B, R, A, SELECT, SELECT, Y, A, B, Y, A and B. Then simply unpause the game. To access the cheat menu screen, PAUSE the game again, and type A, L, L. Unpause the game and you should now be presented with the menu screen. For infinite lives, PAUSE the game and type R, A, SELECT and Y. Unpause the game and you should now find that you'll be invincible. To skip through a Virtual World, PAUSE the game while inside it and press A. Unpause and if everything's fine and dandy you should find yourself whisked to the exit.

MEGA DRIVE

SHINOBI 3

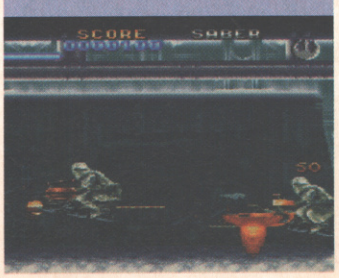
A game that's starting to creak gently, but it's still good enough despite its age. If you want INFINITE SHURIKENS, go to the options screen and set the number of shurikens to 00. Whistle for a bit and an infinity symbol will appear. Play the game and huzzah, infinite shurikens are yours my friend. Now for a cheat that could have been thought up by staff writer Rik who, it must be said, does like his game music. Play each of the songs on the sound test in the correct order, and you should find old Joe-ninja boy completely invincible.

SNES

SUPER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

This game is a fine tribute to the film. It can prove a trifle sherry difficult at times though. To swing the odds in your favour try this sassy little cheat.

While playing the game press and hold Y, B, X, A and DOWN. Keep holding them and press START to access a sound test screen. Press START again to return to the game and then do all the above once again. If you've done this correctly then you should notice that the message under the sound test words has changed. Now, by entering Y, Y, Y and Y on the title screen you'll be able to rotate the Empire logo by pressing the L and R buttons. A much more useful cheat though, is achieved by holding X, Y, A, B and X on the title screen. This will give you seven credits. Oh, by the way, turn the machine off and on to get these cheats to work.



SNES

WING COMMANDER: THE SECRET MISSIONS

This conversion is a bit of a sad attempt at emulating the legendary PC original, but that's by the by. Anyway if you've bought the game here's a cheat that should allow you to access a hidden options screen. Press L, R, SELECT and START on controller two. If everything's worked the music should drift away into nothingness and in its place you should be presented with the aforementioned options screen which allows you to become invincible, choose missions and fiddle with the sound.

WE NEED YOUR CUES AND 'EHs

Yes, we do because next month we're starting a special Q&A (that's questions and answers for the acronymally challenged) section, which is going to be divided into two. Q&A (Games) will help you if you're stuck in a game or if you're after a particular cheat, whereas Q&A (General) will throw light on any technical posers you have or if you want to know what the best shoot-'em-up is on the SNES is. So send those quezzies in now!

MEGA-CD

SONIC CD

Here's that long sought after level select that loads of you have been phoning up enquiring about recently. On the title screen simply press UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, B and START. Have fun!

MEGA DRIVE

CHUCK ROCK 2

The original Chuck Rock game did a heck of a lot to zoom Core into the big time and this decent sequel will no doubt do very well too. To advance a level pause the game and press B, A, RIGHT, A, C, UP, DOWN and A. Restart the game, pause it again and PRESS A and RIGHT to advance a level, or A and UP to skip the zone entirely.

MEGA DRIVE

MICRO MACHINES

A big slap on the back is I think due to Codemasters for proving that you don't need decent graphics to sell a game, just decent gameplay. To make the game even more excellent however, why not try these crazy cheats while playing the game:

Press UP, DOWN, A, B, LEFT, RIGHT, C and START to speed up your car.

Press A, UP, B, DOWN, C, LEFT, START, and RIGHT to increase your car's traction.

Press LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, UP, DOWN, START and DOWN to make your opponents really tough.
Finally, press C, UP, LEFT, RIGHT, A, B, A and C to dish out mega damage to opponents when you crash into them.

AMIGA

ELITE 2: FRONTIER

Bit of a learner in Elite 2 huh? Well here's a tip that should make you Elitist. Start trading and saving your money until you can afford a passenger cabin. Pick up some people and go to the BUY and SELL section and take a gander at the new and used ships. Keep looking until you find a ship with a minus figure in the part-exchange column and attempt to sell your ship by pressing 'buy'. A message will inform you that you can't sell a ship with people on board, but you'll still be given the trade-in value. Then simply set your firebutton to 'auto', repeat the process and you'll have enough cash to pay Gillian Taylforth's legal bills!

SNES

TURTLES TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS

Despite having the pick of the games industry's finest in front of us all day, every day, there's some carts that we just can't help going back to, and Turtles Tournament Fighters certainly is one of them. It also fits into the 'hmm, it's all a bit Streetfightery isn't it?' department too. And not only that but Konami has also included a turbo speed option just in case you were thinking of buying SFII instead!

On the title screen use the second control pad and press UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, B, A. You should hear an aggressive cry and find that there's now a third speed setting on the option screen.

MEGA DRIVE

RANGER-X

Good graphics for sure, but I thought this one was overrated. Still, if you liked it and are looking for extra levels then you've come to the right place squire.

Go to the options screen and press A, B, C, A, B, C, A, B and lastly C. Select EASY level, start the game and hey nonny nonny, a new area is all yours.

MEGA DRIVE

GOLDEN AXE 3

Now not a lot of people know this but there's a level select on this game.

Simply go to the character selection screen and place the cursor over your character then press A four times, START and then C six times. Easy when you know how.

PREVIEW

MEGA DRIVE/A1200/CD32

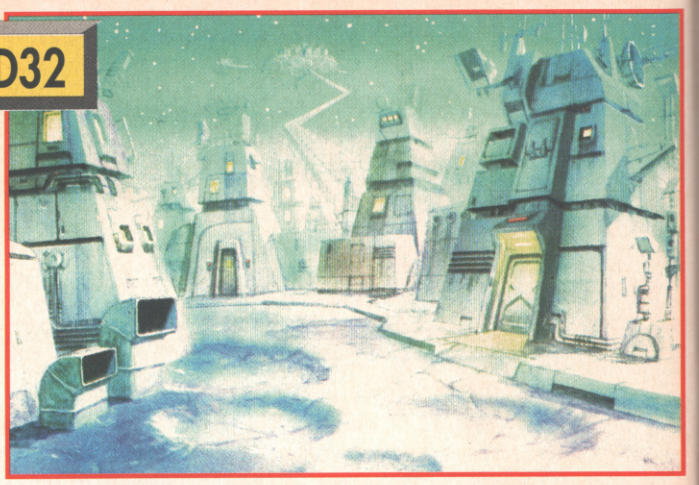
by CORE

£TBA

JUNE RELEASE

Stage of Development

65% Complete



Core's designers have let their creative juices flow with these backdrops.

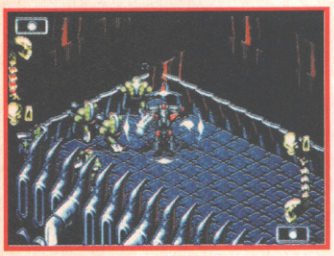
Are you after a shoot-'em-up par excellence to fill those summer months? You may have to look no further...

SKELETON KREW

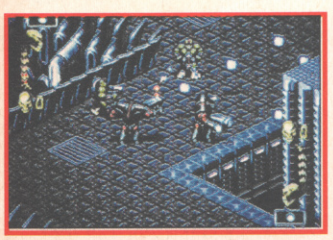
Looking for a well-hard blast to satisfy your craving for death and destruction on a grand scale? Well Core reckons you'll have to wait no longer than June, by which time it should have released Skeleton Krew, one of the best-looking shooters we've seen for some time.

Kookie krew

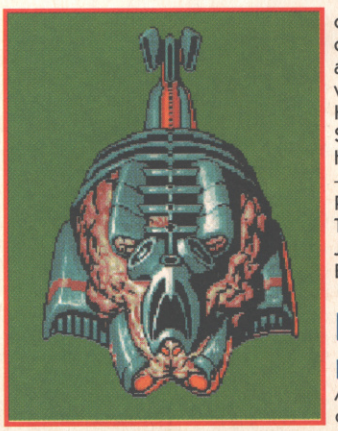
First the plot. It's 2070, and Moribund Kadaver, head of DEAD Inc, is creating hideous cryogenic mutants to take over Monstro City. The military has produced a squad of undead agents – the Skeleton Krew – to battle its way through to DEAD Inc's cryo-plant to slaughter the Psykogenix.



Krew will have 18 different zones to make your way through...



... and it's going to have a polished isometric feel to it.



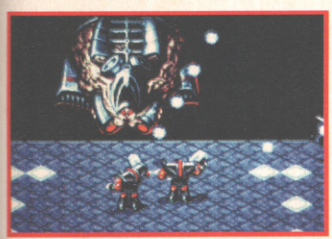
Killing krew

What this tale converts to is an 18-zone isometric shoot-'em-up, the likes of which hasn't been seen since Domark's Amiga conversion of Tengen's Escape From The Planet Of The Robot Monsters coin-op. The player can choose his character from the trio which is the Skeleton Krew: Rib, Joint and Spine. Each character has a special weapon – Spine's Pulverax Plasma Beam, Rib's Tri-blast Trasher and Joint's Krash 'n' Burn Blaster.

Krew's missile

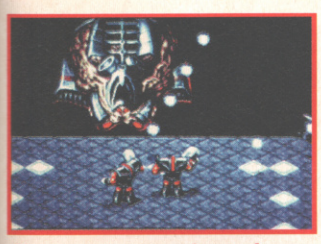
A one or simultaneous two-player game, the Krew must shoot their way through five levels, broken up into a number of zones. Your characters can swivel their bodies and guns to fire and walk in up to eight different directions independently of each other, depending on

Yes, even in the year 2070, seatbelt laws are still in force.

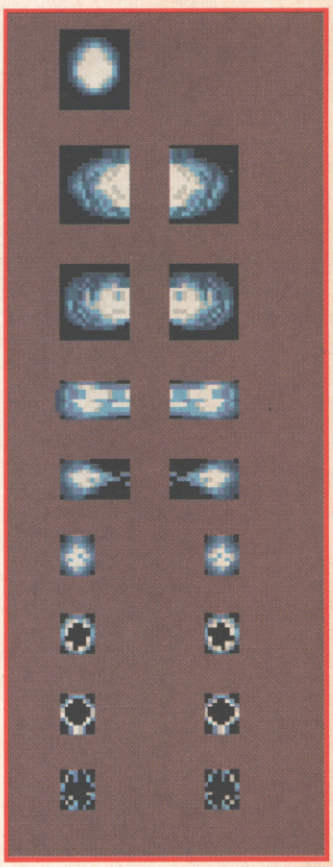


Skeleton Krew is going to be pure shoot-'em-up action.

The Krew's sprites are still receiving the finishing touches.



Opponents are going to be meaty – 100% pure beef in fact.

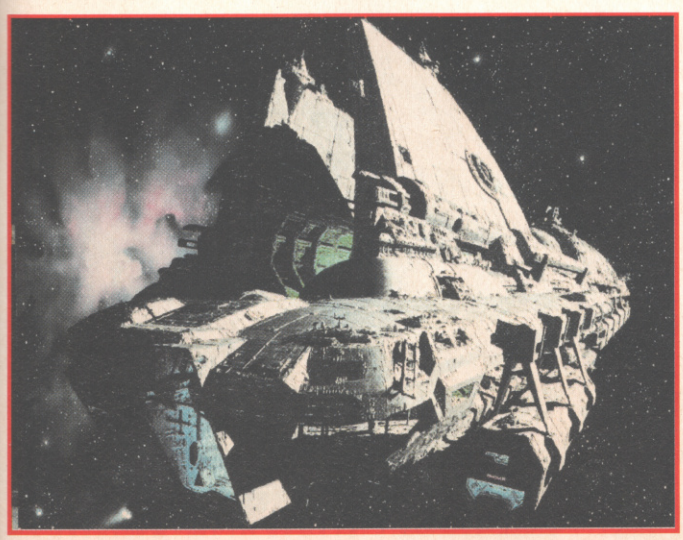


which of the Krew you control – Joint, being more robot than human, has a torso totally unattached from his legs so can spin through the full 360 degrees, whereas the other two are limited because of their spines.

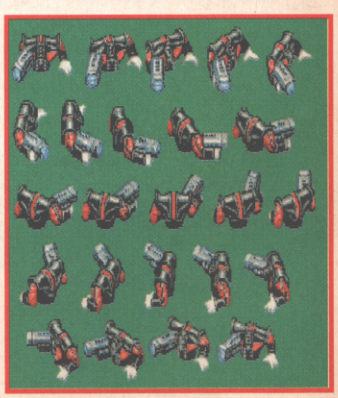
Krew kut

When the Krew aren't blasting away ar Kadaver's creations, they're jumping on to speeder bikes and jet-skis and storming through stages packed to the brim with ramps, walls and a selection of sadistic Psykogenix, to reach new parts of the game.

Skeleton Krew, as you can see from these screenshots, looks very impressive indeed, with big, meaty sprites and highly detailed backdrops; and it's the sort of gun fest shoot-'em-up that'll keep you up until the wee small hours while you waste a few more mutant mothers, if the version we've played is anything to go by. There's still quite a bit of work to be done – the later levels have to be pieced together, and the enemy logic has yet to be put in place, but believe us – Skeleton Krew is one that's going to be hot game. Expect the full rampaging review in a couple of issues time. ●



One of your motley Skeleton Krew in early development.

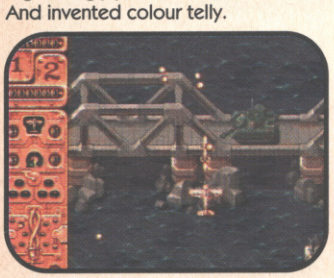


PREVIEW

BANSHEE
A1200 ONLY
CORE
£TBA

A reworking of an old arcade favourite, courtesy of Core

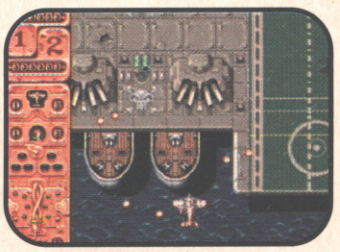
In this reworking of the 1942 coin-op formula, the world has evolved differently to that which we know. The two World Wars never happened and technology has been slow to appear; indeed, people still sit and stare at black-and-white TVs. That's until Blardax Maldrear, leader of the Styx Republic, decided to take over Earth and, in the space of five years, devised an assortment of frighteningly powerful war machines. And invented colour telly.



That cruise missile you've just launched would have made short work of the tank. Had you got it on target, that is.

Olde worlde

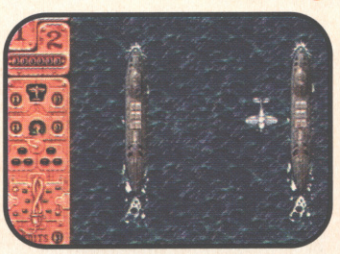
This is a simple yet useful excuse for giving this vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up a look similar to the Victoriana used in The Chaos Engine. You (and a friend, if you desire) take to the skies in your Banshee fighter plane and blast your way through six levels of adrenaline-pumping action, taking on nuclear submarines, huge aircraft carriers and, of course, an array of airborne adversaries. There are the usual icons to collect which will give you power-ups such as special weapons, fuel and extra lives, and there's a big boss baddy at the end of each stage to take on.



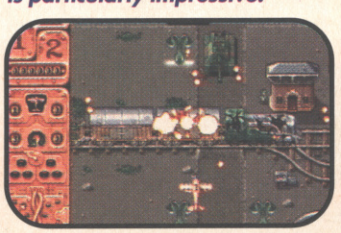
The skull and crossbones insignia indicates that this gunboat docking yard isn't on the friendly side.

Sauted soldiers

With 1994 shaping up to be a year of blasters, Banshee looks perfectly placed to take its share of the spoils. Graphically it's great, with touches such as fog effects that make your enemies more difficult to spot adding to the already excellent stylised visuals. Worth a special mention are the patrolling soldiers who die in various different ways – our favourite has to be when they catch fire – they run around frantically, engulfed in a ball of flame. Looking something of a winner, check out the review in CVG soon.



The effect of the submarines rising from under the ocean is particularly impressive.



With Chaos Engine-inspired graphics, Banshee is a little different to your run-of-the-mill vertical scroller.

DARKSTONE
AMIGA
CORE
£TBA

Zelda-style RPG is coming to the Amiga!

Currently one of the busiest software houses around, Core has over a dozen different titles in production at the moment. Darkstone is just one of them and it's a role-playing game in the Zelda mould, in which you play the part of either Aelphric or Freydian in a quest to find the Crystals of the Bright Trinity in order to rid Midworld of the scourge of Myrdir, the Great Dragon.

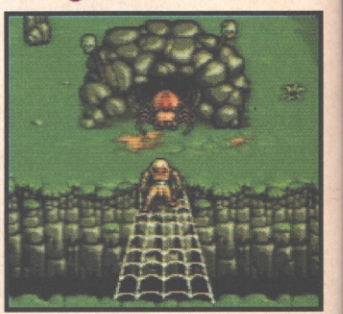
Inside one of the houses, this old crone could well be stirring up trouble for you.

Adventuring ahoy

You get the general idea. Dragon Stone is in the relatively early stages of development, but Core hopes to have the game ready in time for a June release. Travel through forests, towns and caverns, hunting for the crystals which, when joined together, will banish the dragons from Midworld and allow you to live in peace and harmony. There's a variety of objects to pick up and use, and a full cast of characters to talk to and glean information from.

It's a big 'un

At present there are four huge levels planned, but when we spoke to the programmers of the game at their Derby headquarters, they were pondering over whether to include a fifth stage, which would be set on a giant ship that takes you over to the dragons' base. This kind of adventure game is usually guaranteed to have players burning the midnight oil for some considerable period of time – just ask SNES-owning Zelda fans – and by the look of things, that should be true of Dark Stone. We'll be keeping a watchful eye on its progress, and reviewing it in the near future.



Step into my parlour, said the spider to the bloke with the rather large sword.

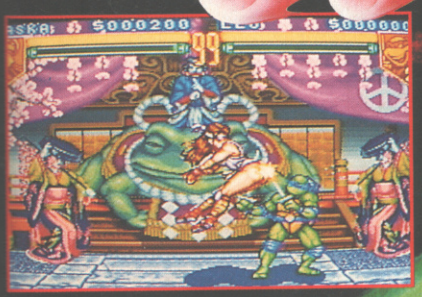
If this is Stonehenge, where are the hippies and Rizlas?

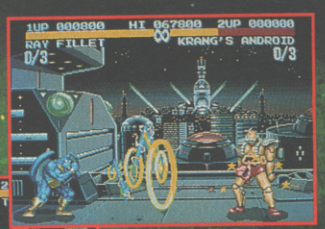
From Michaelangelo's Fantasy World...

to Donatello's Futuristic City, the Turtles transcend time through to another dimension, in this, the ultimate confrontational fighting game.

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES

TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS





SEGA MEGA DRIVE

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

KONAMI

Konami (UK) Limited Television House 269 Field End Road Eastcote Middlesex HA4 9LS

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PREVIEW

SNES

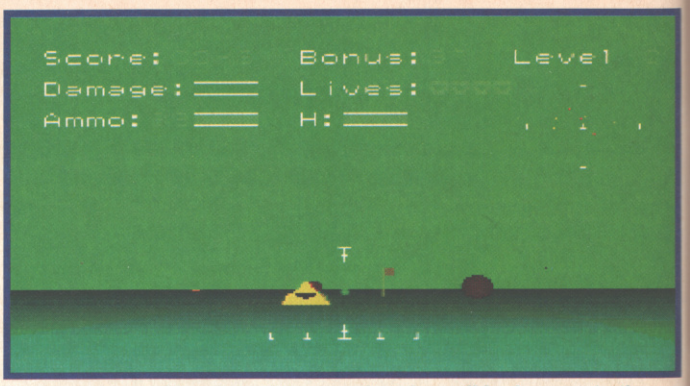
by GAMETEK

Around £44.99

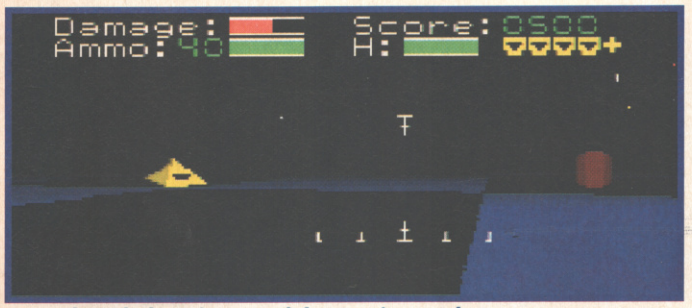
JUNE RELEASE

Stage of Development

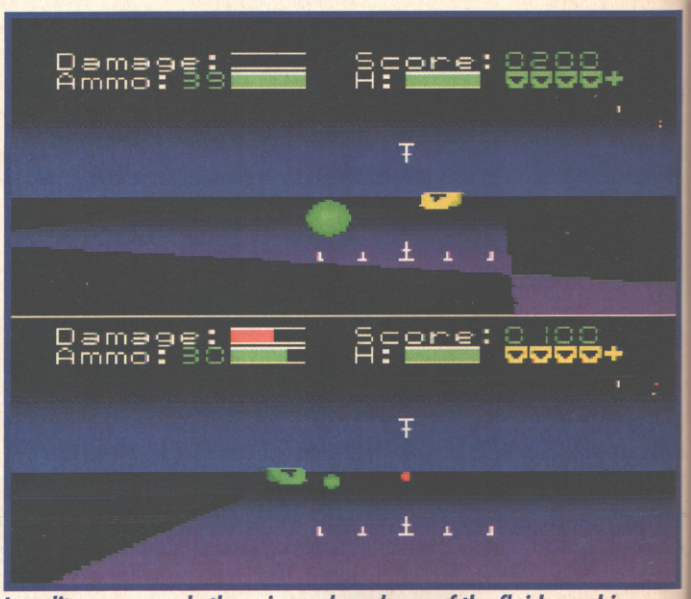
100% Complete



There are lots of levels in this game but they all look very similar, just with different colours in the main.



Even though there isn't much happening on the screen at any one time, the action is very addictive.



In split-screen mode there is no slow down of the fluid graphics. Players can also jump over their opponents.

SPECTRE

This isn't a Nineties Battlezone surely? Nope, it just looks like it

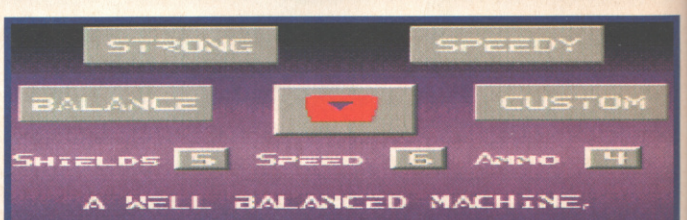
Here in the CVG offices, members of staff are often found grunting and cursing from behind their Macintosh computers. Usually it's because their tea and coffee tastes like radioactive waste (we've got a new machine you see), but otherwise it's because everyone is networked to play Spectre.

Unfortunately, the SNES version isn't going to support more than two simultaneous players, but it will offer the same 3D action and skill-demanding gameplay.

Can't keep still

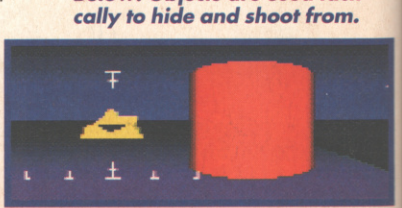
What you will get though, is a stack of stages which consist of a flat grid and your play area. On this you'll find your tank and loads of other enemy tanks. So, using your radar you'll enter into a kill or be killed battle. Geometric shapes are randomly distributed on the grid, and you can use these to hide behind – but so can your enemy. There are two different games, one where you play for points, which requires more trigger work, or you can seek to capture your enemy's flags which are scattered about.

Energy and ammunition will be limited, and to replenish these you'll have to glide over a supply of special coloured squares. Your choice of tank will dictate how dependent you are on these squares, since they have varying shield, speed and weapon stocks.



Above: Each craft can be configured.

What's unique to the SNES version is the ability to jump, which will be useful for peeping out from behind hiding points and avoiding enemy fire. There's also a two-player split-screen mode which makes up for the fact that the game can't be networked like our Mac version. Watch out for the review soon. ●



Below: Objects are used tactically to hide and shoot from.

PREVIEW

PC CD-ROM

by MINDSCAPE

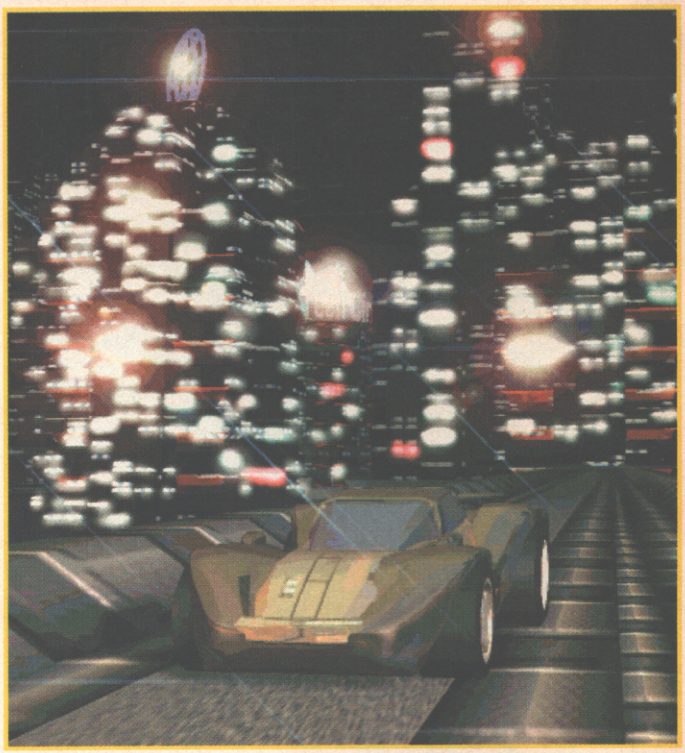
Around £39.99

MARCH RELEASE

Stage of Development

75% Complete

MEGARACE



This is typical of the graphics in this game. The images are not as sharp as they are in 3DO's Crash 'n' Burn, but they work better here.

That's Crash 'n' Burn on the 3DO isn't it? Actually, it isn't but it looks damn similar and word has it that this is going to be outstanding

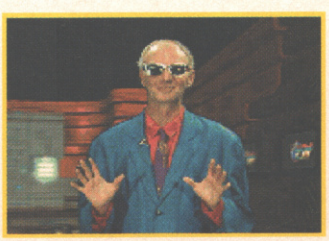
CD-ROM junkie, Mindscape, is looking to launch its most stunning PC product to date. Making a pleasant change to its usual educational stuff, Megarace is essentially a racing game where you get to blast street gangs on live TV.

Your goal is to score masses of points by driving as fast as possible over a gorgeously ray-traced set of 14 tracks in five cities. The story unfolds as you take the role of a contestant who takes on increasingly brutal challengers who try to slam them into those walls and gun them into submission. Along the tracks you'll find icons in abundance, and these are power-ups and power-downs, so some will make you faster, others will make you explode.

Mile end

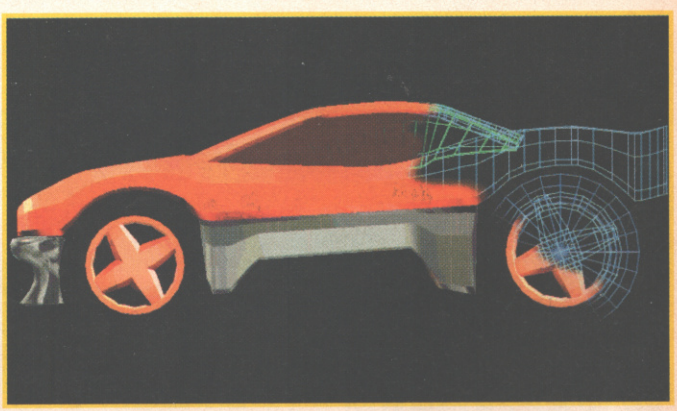
At the end of each stage you'll have to challenge the gang leader and if you defeat him you'll be blessed with his vehicle and weapons for the next bout. By the end you should've amassed a total of eight cars, including the three you started off with.

The early version we've seen has a stunning FMV talkie introduction from the presenter Lance Boyle, and there's over 20 minutes of the stuff too. The tracks are blindingly well defined, there's plenty of them - it's nice to see companies making good use of CD storage. We'll be reviewing Megarace in a forthcoming issue.



The FMV introduction is the best quality yet seen on the PC.

The actual game looks like this. Power-ups will be found scattered on the course. Some tracks even rotate through 360 degrees!



Your car will sustain damage during each race session. What you need to do is go for the best vehicle for each course.

PREVIEW

MEGA DRIVE

by ACCOLADE

£TBA

APRIL

Stage of Development

100% Complete

BRETT HULL HOCKEY

Accolade is looking to challenge EA's classic NHL series with an extremely comprehensive alternative...

Accolade has put an awful lot of time and money behind Brett Hull Hockey in a bid for this to be the comprehensive hockey simulation; and on paper it sounds impressive...

Naturally, you get Brett himself, but there'll be over 600 other real NHLPA players too. Accolade is also aiming for Brett Hull Hockey to be the only hockey game offering a full 84-game season and complete 1994 team rosters and match schedules.

Behind you

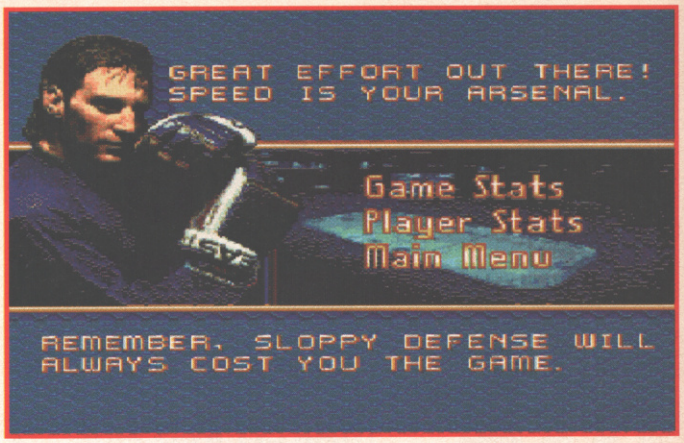
The action is set to be played from a behind-and-slightly-above perspective, which has been made to work really well, thanks to some well timed scrolling. During play you'll be accompanied by a running commentary from the famous US TV broadcaster Al Michaels. A range of customisable facilities will be included to enable players to select such aspects as skating speed, stick handling and aggressiveness to name but a few. Players will also be able to engage in fisticuffs when the opposition starts to get a bit lairy.

Perhaps the most inviting aspect of the game is the well animated graphics. These are very detailed, but they still allow the puck to be seen with ease. However, we have noticed a possible problem in that when you're shooting up the field it's more difficult to aim at the net because it appears to be far smaller.

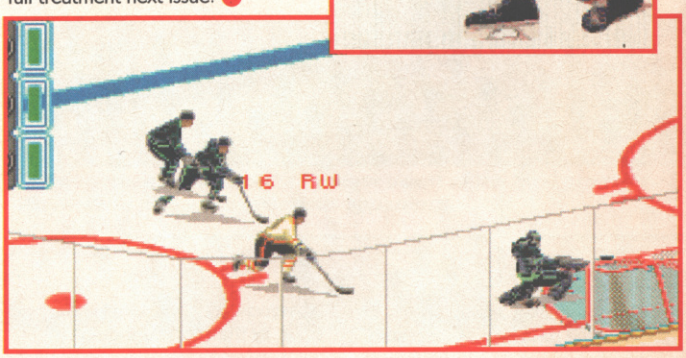
Great looker

The momentum on characters handles excellently and the 'feel' is spot on at present. It's also nice to know that you'll be able to control the goalie too. We'll be giving it the full treatment next issue.

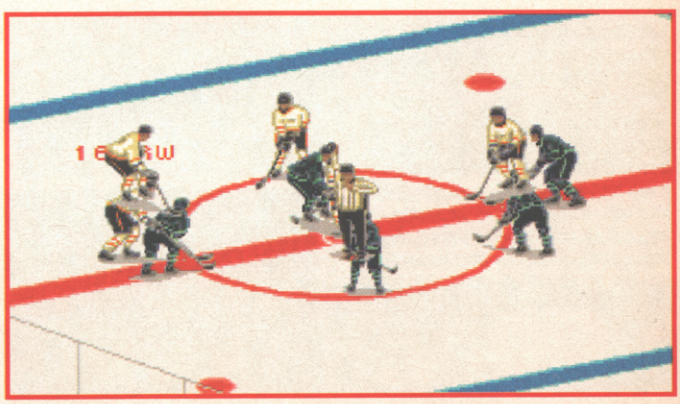
Full team statistics prove valuable in setting up a fair game.



You want lots of options in any sports game, and here you certainly have them. Everything is also up to date for 1994. You also get comment on your performance.



Some of the tackles can be quite complicated. The scrolling always keeps up with the puck and this makes quick decisions and reactions feasible.



The perspective is one of the best features in this game. It's always easy to see the puck, which isn't the case in some hockey games.

PREVIEW

CD-i

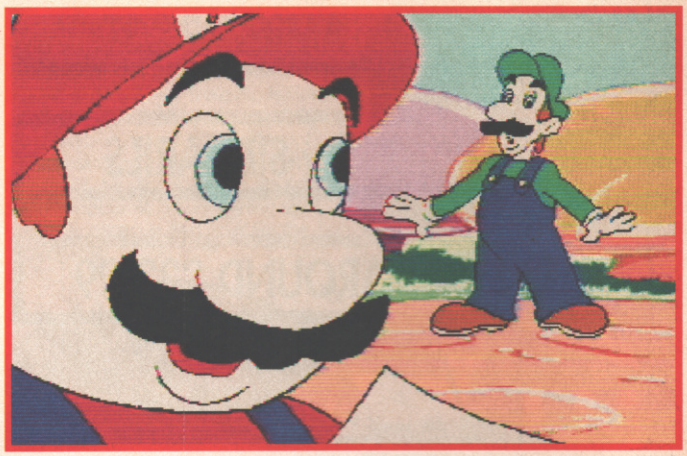
by PHILLIPS

£TBA

MAY RELEASE

Stage of Development

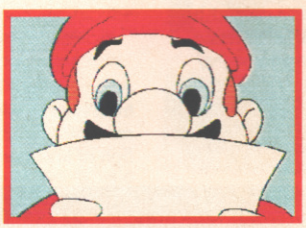
90% Completed



HOTEL MARIO

CD-i ventures into classic territory with its licence of Nintendo's Mario Bros characters. Can Philips do a better job than the plumbers' creators?

You don't need me to tell you that this is going to be a platform game - that's what Mario is famous for. But this isn't destined to be the usual platform type of thing, instead Hotel Mario is going to have a puzzle-based theme. What's apparently happened you see, is that Bowser has gained control of all the hotels in Mushroom Kingdom and kidnapped Yoshi. Controlling Mario, you'll rush around each hotel front closing all the doors to complete the stage. It's against the clock so the time will be against you, and so will all manner of woodland creatures who pop out of their rooms to see what all the fuss is about.

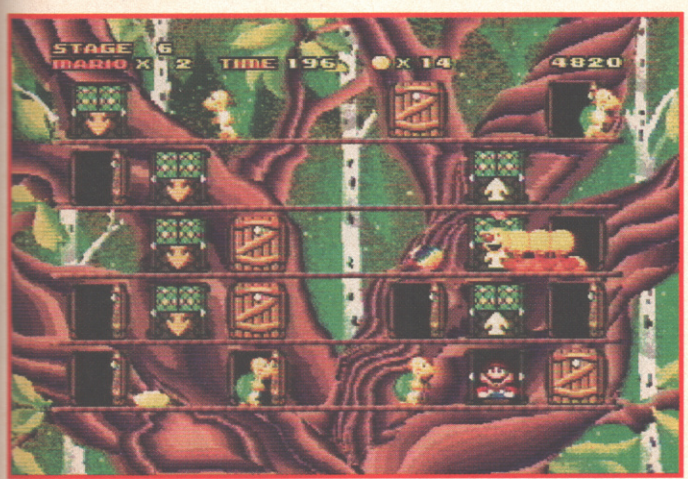


Test of time

The key element of the game will be timing. Some baddies move fast, some slow, while others go round opening the doors you've just closed. Hence, the challenge will rest in forward thinking to work out a safe route through each floor. Of course, Mario will be able to perform his head stomp on opponents which is crucial to clear a path to those doors. But you'll have to watch out for baddies on the floor above when jumping or you'll hit them, and that spells instant death, not shrinkage.

As you dash around the 85 stages you can collect coins for extra points, or discover secret shortcuts. Also, Hotel Mario isn't going to require an FMV cartridge to play its animation sequences and well produced music and effects.

Although childishly simple, Hotel Mario seems quite addictive, although it could well turn out to be a bit on the repetitive side. You'll just have to wait for the review to find out. ●



Close all the doors before the times runs out. New levels don't necessarily bring more doors – just more baddies coming out of them.

The doors with arrows on take you up and down the floors. Be careful when you exit, as baddies chase you immediately.

PREVIEW

AMIGA,PC,ST

by SILMARILS

AROUND £32.99

APRIL RELEASE

Stage of Development

75% Completed

ISHAR 3

Dragons, dungeons, an evil wizard called Shandar. The latest instalment in Silmarils' Ishar trilogy has it all

In the town, in the country, in a stinking underground labyrinth, waist-deep in sewage. Who knows where you'll find yourself in Ishar 3. It's just a nutty kind of game.

Looks pretty, this, doesn't it? It's Ishar 3, which will be entering the 3D role-playing game fray some time this spring, going toe-to-toe in a savage, swords-and-sorcery, blood-and-snot battle with the likes of Ultima Underworld.

Let me take you back...

Appropriately, the story follows on from Ishar 2, which, as you no doubt remember, culminated in the destruction of Shandar, an evil wizard who was making trouble on the planet of Ishar. Well, Shandar's back, or at least his soul is, and it's looking for a new body to infest so that it can resume its quest for Ishar domination. Trouble is, he wants to return in the body of Wohratax, the last survivor of the Black Dragon race who, apart from being immortal, is also the single hardest creature roaming the world of Ishar with excellent fighting abilities as well as magic. Which explains why Shandar's after him.

There's still time to stop Shandar before he takes the dragon's form. The only way to do it, though, is to travel through monster-packed scenery looking for time gates which take you and your gang of mystical mercenaries back in time to kill Wohratax before the start of these shenanigans.

Honestly, officer, there we were, innocently collecting truffles, when we were mugged by this red-eyed maniac with a big sword!

Ishar's army

Ishar 3 is certainly feature-packed. You can select your team of five adventurers from an army of over 100 characters, all with different abilities and personalities. The game uses a 3D viewing window (which flicks like Eye of the Beholder's rather than scrolling) to display indoor and outdoor locations, and as in Ishar 2, you get day and night-time lighting effects. It also features animated film sequences and real-time fights - always preferable to those dull, old, combat-by-rounds systems.

It certainly sounds good, but with so many similar RPGs knocking around - and good ones they are too - we can't help but wonder whether all these features will be enough to lure us away from the likes of Underworld. We'll find out, as will you, next month when we get our hands on a review copy.

PREVIEW

MEGA DRIVE

by GREMLIN

£TBA

OUT TBA

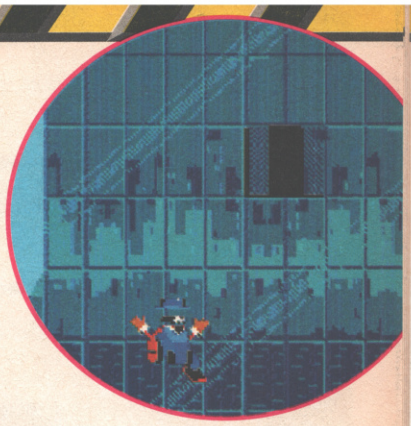
Stage of Development

65% Complete

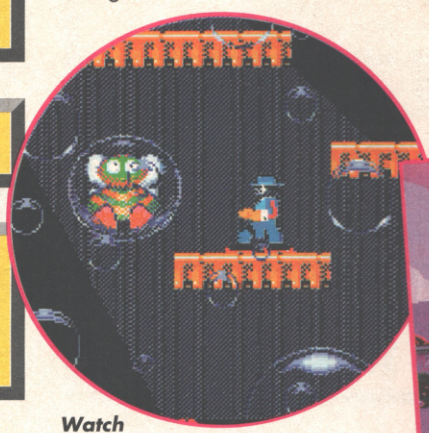
HOUSE OF FUN

Can the Harlequin game return with the same vengeance that Madness managed to a couple of years back?

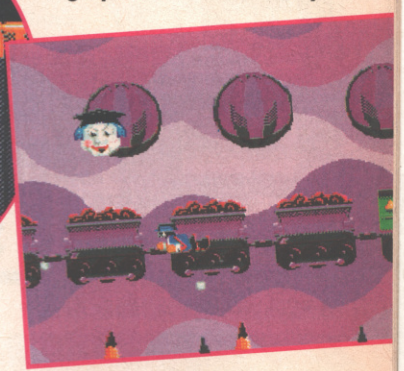
Yes, this is a game based on The Nutty Boys (as they were known circa 1984) who made themselves famous with the likes of House of Fun, Baggy Trousers, It Must Be Love, Night Boat to Cairo and One Step Beyond, to name just a few of their classic tracks. Let's hope that this is not the slippery slope, though, to less reputable bands signing up games licences, ie Bad Boys Inc the videogame!



The reflections on this tower are a graphical feast I can tell you.



Watch out for this baddie, 'cos he won't stay in the bubble long!



Here's one of the typical guardians you can expect to come across. They're not exactly difficult to beat.

My name is Michael Caine

Madness House of Fun stars a character called Mr Smash (who is based on Carl from the group), and is another platformer with the key feature being a large selection of the tunes which are supplied by Suggs and Co.

There are 14 levels, each with its own set of enemies, puzzles, power-ups and hidden rooms, played out against what are shaping up to be some decent looking backdrops. A clue system has been woven into the game to hopefully prevent novices getting frustrated by not being able to progress through the game.

Some of the later level graphics are particularly well detailed.

Night Boat to Cairo

Game veterans will recall this game is based on an old Amiga platformer called Harlequin. Despite being a decent game at the time, it didn't sell well. The game on offer here is essentially Harlequin with Madness based sprites. Keep an eye out sometime around the middle of the year to see whether the game reveals its age or not. ●

Like Cool Spot, some of the points are invisible. Make sure you run everywhere to gather them all.

You'll need to discover a nearby pick-up to breathe in the water.

Not exactly a subtle piece of sponsorship, eh readers?!

PREVIEW

AMIGA/PC

by CORE

£TBA

APRIL RELEASE

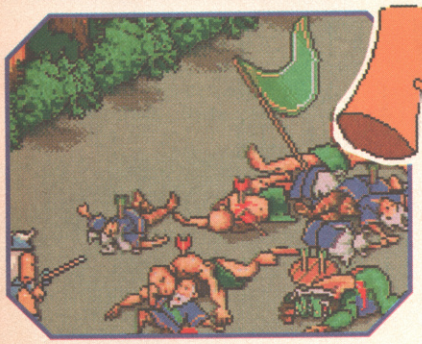
Stage of Development

30% Complete

You can play either Heimdall or Urshua, a female warrior.

It's not just the main graphics that are sumptuous, check out those backgrounds.

Throw the roll at the rat and it'll pull the lever, releasing you from jail.



If you can solve an earlier puzzle then one of these chaps isn't as dead as he appears.

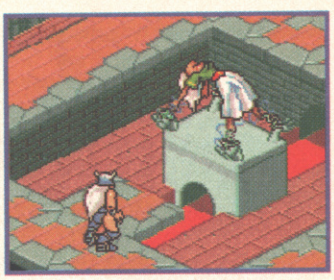
Heimdall 2 Into the Hall of Worlds

Simply walk over objects to add them to your inventory.

CVG manages to avoid any 'Core blimey' intros as it takes a peek at the impressive looking sequel to Heimdall

Erik the Viking

Once again Loki, the first game's villain, is up to his old tricks. Since his original run-in with Heimdall, he's been walking the land, building up an army of vicious Hakrats. Fortunately the gods have learned of a special amulet which is powerful enough to trap the evil god but — surprise, surprise — this weapon has been spilt into six segments which have been scattered throughout the land. So Heimdall has been called upon to reassemble the shattered amulet and capture Loki, while avoiding the general traps and defeating the hideous creatures most self-respecting heroes take care of before breakfast. All in a day's work, really.



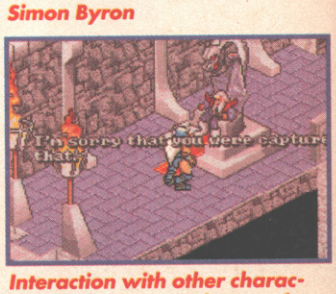
Here's someone's daughter who needs to be rescued.

This is obviously not one of the more complex puzzles in the game... or is it?

Pippa Longstocking

Good story, huh? Like the original game, Heimdall 2 is an isometric arcade adventure. But what really makes Heimdall 2 substantially different from its prequel is the background animations and smaller play-area. Although there are significantly fewer locations in Heimdall 2, there are more puzzles so there won't be lengthy periods of wandering around, looking for something to do — something which the first game was occasionally criticised for. There are loads of incidental background animations and 'nice touches' popping up all over the place, giving the game a unique cartoon feel. Combat will also play a huge part in the game, meaning this shouldn't just appeal to RPGers. Keep an eye out when it's on the rampage around Easter time.

Simon Byron



Interaction with other characters is not that good. Here, for instance, you've simply got to sit and listen to the king waffling on.

PREVIEW

CD32

by THALION

£TBA

SPRING RELEASE

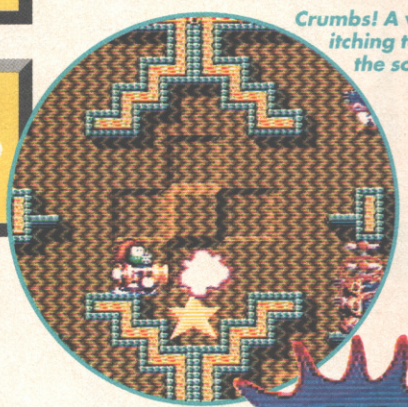
Stage of Development

90% Complete

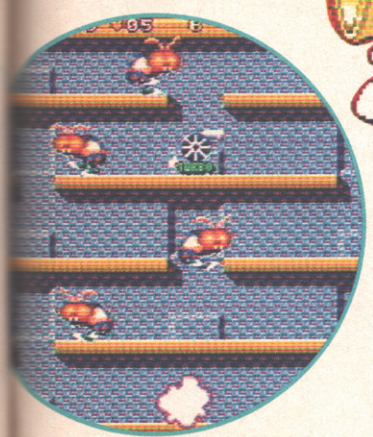
SUPER METHANE BROS

It's back to the heady days of cute coin-op action with Thalion's first CD32 title!

The opening to the obligatory CD32 intro.



Crumbs! A veritable horde of nasties just itching to be given the gas – but it's not the sort that'll make them laugh.



Puff fires a blast of methane – it's just a pity there's nothing around to be caught in it!

Select a one or two player game – it makes things a bit easier if there's a pair of you taking on the terrors.

With the imminent introduction of the classification system for games, doubtless companies will be now attempting to tone down the content of the software they produce, as opposed to slapping in a few gory bits to gain a higher certificate and play on the 'can't have so must have' mentality of Joe Punter. And what better way to conform to the ELSPA directive than to release a cutesy caper that owes just a tad to the Bubble Bobble/Parasol Stars type of gameplay?

Parp

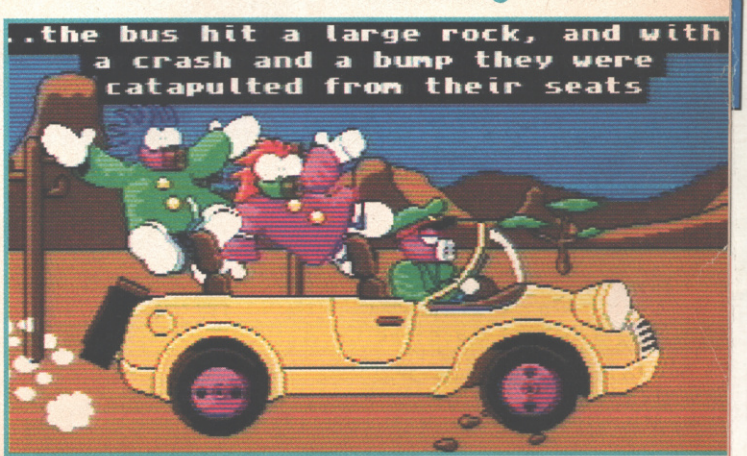
Super Methane Bros from Thalion, the company which brought you the excellent No Second Prize and Lionheart (which, are both appearing on CD32 in April at a scandalously reasonable £19.99 each), may sound as though it has farting connotations, but you'd be wrong.

The two main characters, Puff and Blow (whoever came up with those names remembers the Seventies a bit too well – Ed), are stars when it comes to firing gas clouds at baddies from their special methane guns, and they put their skills to the test over level-after-level of arcade action. The idea is to blast the enemies with your gas guns, catch them in the cloud of methane, pick them up and throw them against a wall, at which point they'll release a stack of goodies which you can pick up. Clear a level of nasties and you'll move on to the next, more difficult level.

More introductory shenanigans abound. Could we have another Bubble Bobble on our hands?

Quack

Bubble Bobble and Parasol Stars were both hits and Super Methane Bros derives much of its gameplay style, and look, to those two classics. More and more quality product is being released on CD32, so let's hope Super Methane Bros keeps up the tradition when we review it soon.



YOB'S MAIL BAG

PWOOOAAAAARRR? What's that foul aroma rising up from beneath my desk? Is it a dead rat? How about a six-month old pile of puke? No, it's another pile of pap otherwise known as letters to the one and only YOB'S MAILBAG! Luckily Yours Truly is on hand to send sad people packing with my good humour, refined manners and legendary knowledge of everything. If you reckon you can match the wit and wisdom found hiding somewhere on these pages, or you just want to know about games, then this is the place to be. Remember to open your eyes, grasp the pen firmly in your left or right hand, take a deep breath, make sure you're sitting in front of a piece of paper and fire off your shambolic scribblings to: LOOK, IF YOU WANT MY ADVICE DON'T BOTHER TO DELIVER THIS BECAUSE IT'S A STEAMING PILE OF OLD JOBBIES, YOB'S GUT-BUSTINGLY GLORIOUS MAILBAG, CVG, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

SORRY SCOUSE SCRIBBLINGS

Dear YOB,
I am writing to complain about your rating system. When you review games that are sequels, such as Streetfighter 2 and Super Streetfighter 2, why don't you give two ratings? The first one would compare it to the first game, so people who bought it can tell if it's worth getting the follow-up, and a second rating for all those who don't have it. This way people would know if they were being ripped-off by a game which is essentially the same as one they already own. Anyway, answer my questions.
1. When will the Jaguar be coming out in Britain?
2. Will there be any Streetfighter games coming out for it?
3. How much will the Jaguar cost?
4. Have you got any news of Akira on the Amiga?
5. Why did you suddenly raise the price of your mag?
PAUL DONNELLY
Wirral, Merseyside

PS Keep up the good work.
PPS Who does all the great pics on the letters page?

YOB: Yeah, right. Then we'd get loads of letters from sad-cases going 'I think you reviewing system's too complicated' or 'why to did this game get 60% and 90% on the same review?' Games should be reviewed on their own merit, and if we think they're too similar to a previous incarnation we'll say so.
1. There are some import machines available at the big games stores.
2. Nope.
3. A little bit more than a little bit less.
4. Nope.
5. Because Paul Rand needed the cash for the solar-powered haemorrhoid ointment applicator recommended by his GP. With the price of batteries these days, it's the only machine worth considering for long-term use.

PS Of course.
PPS Some bloke called Stuart we found hanging around Farringdon Lane tube.

PLEASE GIVE ME MY 15 MINUTES

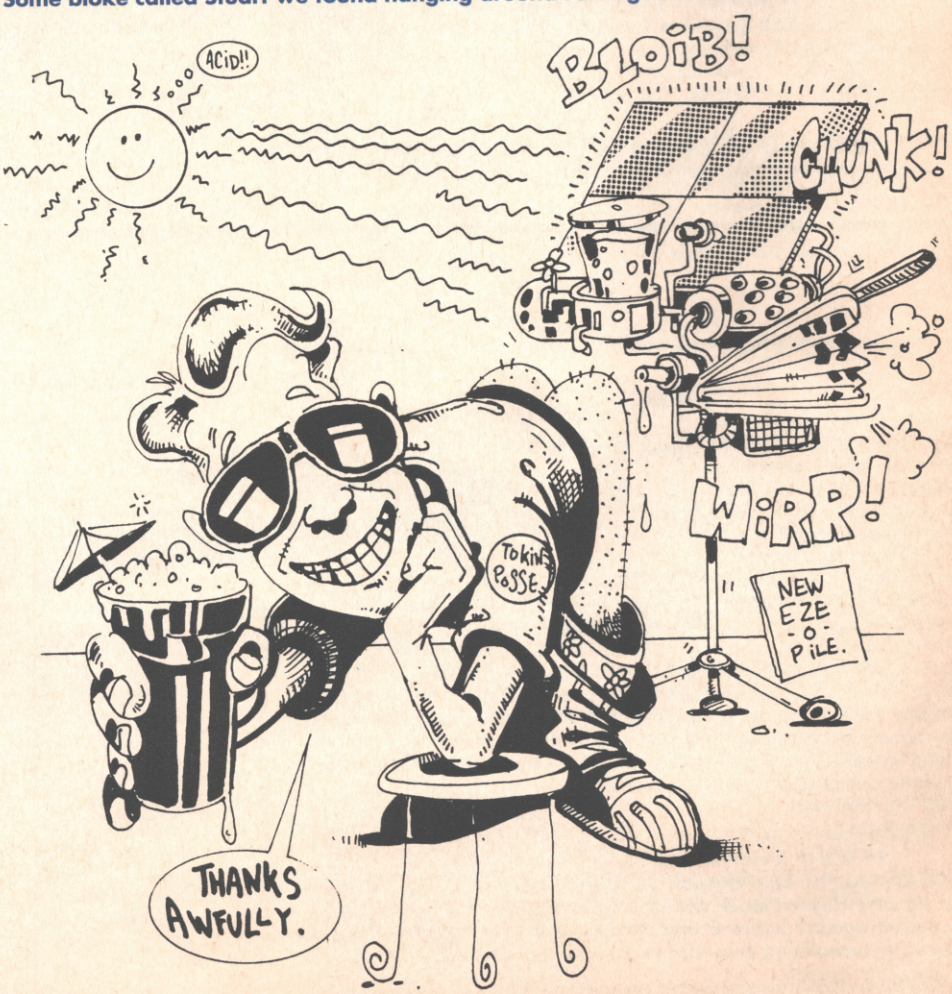
Dear YOB,
I have written to you two times before and both times you didn't print my letter. Why?
DAVID MARCHANT
London E4

YOB: Because your mum wrote to explain that it's all part of your therapy and if I printed your sad shambling efforts it could set back your remedial course by six months.

CRUMBS, HOW ORIGINAL.

Dear YOBYKINS,
!TIBBAR YNNUB SSELBON
ETELPMOC A ERA UOY
JOHN HERDMAN
Devizes, Wilts

YOB: How many members of the Herdman family does it take to change a lightbulb? Answer: all of them. (One to change the bulb, the rest to stand around with their thumbs up their backsides.)



A LESSON IN WASTING NATURAL RESOURCES

Dear YOB,
Why is it all the letters have print are from abusive, small-minded twerps; I mean these seem to be the only people who write to you. If this is the case though, I'm in trouble. Now please answer the following as best you can.
1. What happens to carts that don't get sold?
2. What's going to happen when there are more systems, with more bits than there are games and gamesplayers?
3. How do you change the petrol pump on the old Metro 1.3?
4. How do you kill the mad scientist at the end of Crackdown?
See you in the funny papers.
JON PENNY
Scotland

YOB: 1. I get all the software companies to send them to me and if I'm feeling generous I give them away to my friends. If I'm not I just throw them away.
2. Congratulations. This is the most pathetic question I've been asked all month.
3. Drop a lighted match into it and see what happens. If nothing occurs, the pump is empty and safe to change...
4. You could try shooting him. Better still, you could try shooting yourself.

THE SADDEST PERSON IN THE WORLD

Dear YOB,
I think Cammy is best out of Chun Li and her. Could you draw a picture of me snogging her?
MICHAEL CARTER
Cirencester

YOB: How about a picture of me knocking your sad and depraved head somewhere into next week?

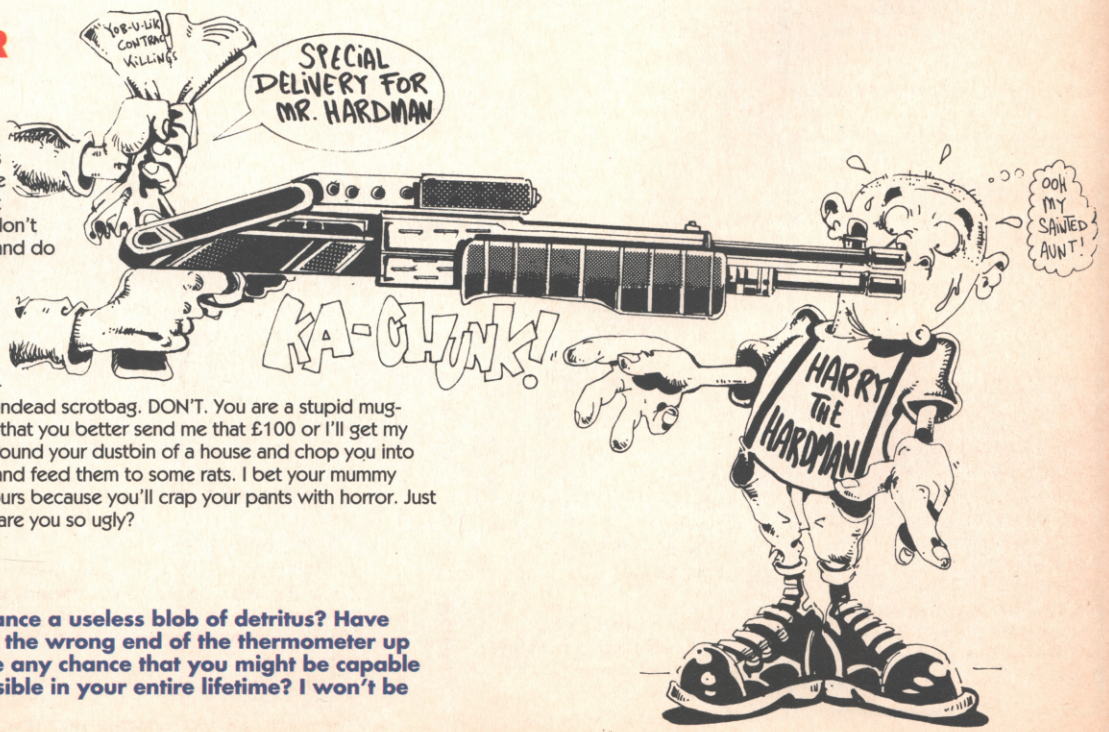
I KNOW NOTHING

Dear YOB,
I am writing and hoping for answers.
1. What's the best game on the Super NES at the moment?
2. What's the best console out?
3. Will Streetfighter II come out for the Game Gear?
4. How come CVG is so fab and cool etc (etc)?
5. What's the most expensive console?
6. What's the future of the Nintendo?
7. How come you are so cool?
8. Why are other computer mags so crap?
MICHAEL SANDERS
Nuneaton

PS Say hello to my bessie friends and my brother.

YOB:1. NBA Jam.
2. At the moment, it's technically the Jaguar, but that's not exactly out yet, is it?
3. The day you achieve conscious thought.
4. Because I run the entire mag, and the rest of the 'crew' are part-time models hired in from the agency. Gary Lord is in fact a milkman from Harrogate, Steve James a chartered surveyor from Dulwich and Paul Rand a red-haired Lancastrian bog-breath who pretends he's blond and comes from Durham. As for Rik and Deniz, well they just appeared one day and beg every morning to be allowed to keep working for the galaxy's greatest mag
5. NASA do a pretty nifty one, knocked out from their Houston factory. Price: $6 billion plus VAT, but you can't get Streetfighter II for it.
6. A tall dark stranger bearing gifts, a chance meeting and a child around June.
7. It's one of life's great secrets I'm afraid, known only to The Few.
8. Hey, don't be so hard on them. So what if they're not as good as the world's greatest games mag? I'm not having a go at you just because you're so completely inferior to me, so leave them alone.

SENSIBLE? OR PRAT?



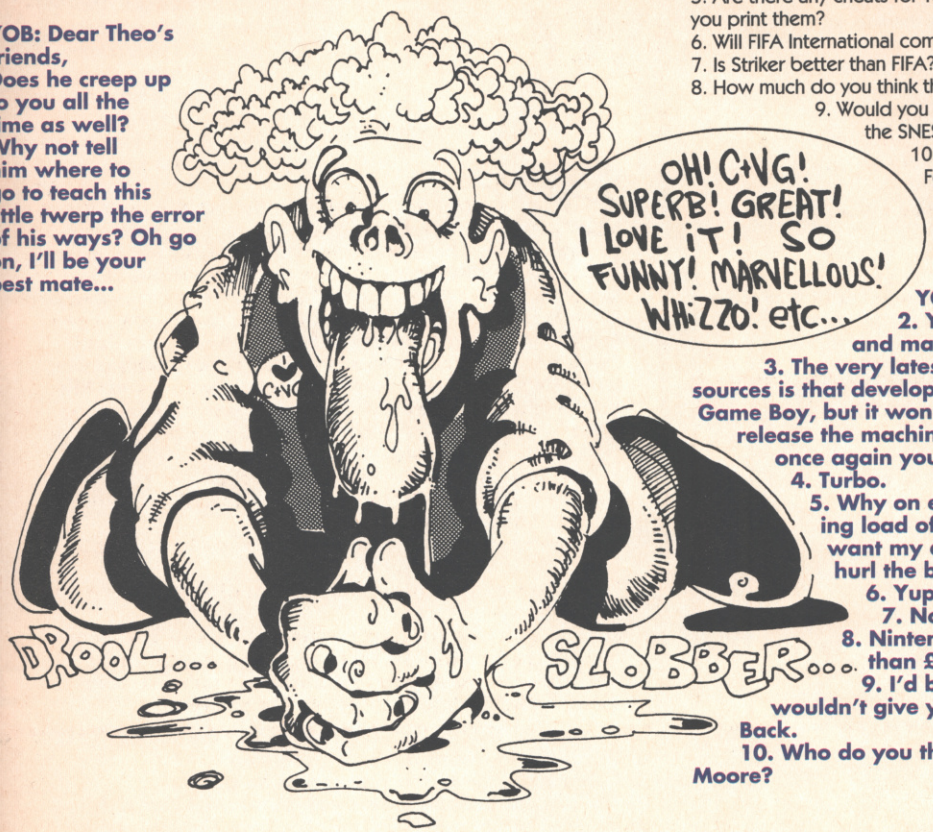
Dear YOB,
You are a stinking pile of cow's muck. You are a disgrace to the human race. I mean just look at yourself. You're a tramp. Why don't you get yourself a proper job and do something decent with yourself? You are a complete waste of time. I could do a much better job than you could ever imagine. And I've got some advice for all you idiotic fools that write to this braindead scrotbag. DON'T. You are a stupid mugshot. All I have to say to you is that you better send me that £100 or I'll get my mate Nick the nutter to come round your dustbin of a house and chop you into little pieces with his chainsaw and feed them to some rats. I bet your mummy doesn't let you watch Neighbours because you'll crap your pants with horror. Just answer me one question: why are you so ugly?
HARRY THE HARDMAN
Croydon, Surrey

YOB: Are you by any chance a useless blob of detritus? Have you by any chance stuck the wrong end of the thermometer up your bum again? Is there any chance that you might be capable of saying something sensible in your entire lifetime? I won't be holding my breath.

BROWN TONGUE CENTRAL

Dear YOB,
I am just writing to say how great your replies to the mailbag are. You get cackholes for letters, yet somehow you make hilarious quotes out of them. You can completely take the mick out of my letter, but I know it's your job and that you're great at it. Anyway, what do you think of Nintendo's ad campaign? Cack ain't it!
THEO HERDMAN
Devizes, Wilts
PS Please could you print my letter to show off to my friends.

YOB: Dear Theo's friends, Does he creep up to you all the time as well? Why not tell him where to go to teach this little twerp the error of his ways? Oh go on, I'll be your best mate...



MACKAM MUTTERINGS

Dear YOB,
I think CVG is an excellent magazine. I get it delivered every month. I read Yob's Mailbag before I read the rest of the magazine. Please could you answer these questions?
1. Will there be a Tuff E Nuff 2 on the Super NES?
2. Will World Heroes 2 be coming to our consoles?
3. Are there any plans for a colour Game Boy from Nintendo?
4. What game is your favourite: Streetfighter II Turbo or Turtle Tournament Fighters?
5. Are there any cheats for Terminator on the Super NES? If so please could you print them?
6. Will FIFA International come out on the SNES?
7. Is Striker better than FIFA?
8. How much do you think the 64-bit SNES will cost when it comes out?
9. Would you buy Tournament Fighters or Empire Strikes Back on the SNES?
10. Could you please put some cheats in for George Foreman's KO Boxing on the Super NES? Please, please, please...
ANDREW BOAD
Washington, Tyne & Wear

YOB: 1. It's possible, but no details yet.
2. Yup. It's coming to Super Nintendo soon and may appear on Mega Drive as well.
3. The very latest word from my highly placed Nintendo sources is that development work IS continuing on the Colour Game Boy, but it won't see the light of day until Nintendo can release the machine at an affordable price. Remember, once again you read it here first!
4. Turbo.
5. Why on earth you'd want cheats for this steaming load of old dog's dollops I don't know. If you want my advice, open your bedroom window and hurl the bloody thing as far as you can.
6. Yup. It'll be out just before the World Cup.
7. Nope.
8. Nintendo claims it'll sell Project Reality for less than £200. Pigs will fly first.
9. I'd buy Tournament Fighters tomorrow. I wouldn't give you a mouldy scab for Empire Strikes Back.
10. Who do you think you're talking to? Patrick bloody Moore?

BORN AGAIN SENSIBILITY

Dear YOB,
You were right. I have been spouting claptrap about the Neo Geo and I apologise.
Is it true that CD-ROM software on the Neo will be as little as £30? If so, will it overshadow the existing cartridges?
STEVEN PIERRO
London N9

YOB: Don't worry. A saddo who admits it has some hope at least. Which is why I'll pass on this juicy titbit of inside info: the latest rumours I hear are that older Neo titles will be supplied on CD, sometimes with more than one game on them. There are even rumours that up to seven games may be included on one CD and sold off for around £40, but I'll believe that when I see it.

LEIBFRAU-MILCH

Dear YOB,
Why are the mountains so high?
DENNIS AND ROY
Koln, Germany

YOB: haven't you noticed that the country you're in doesn't have any?

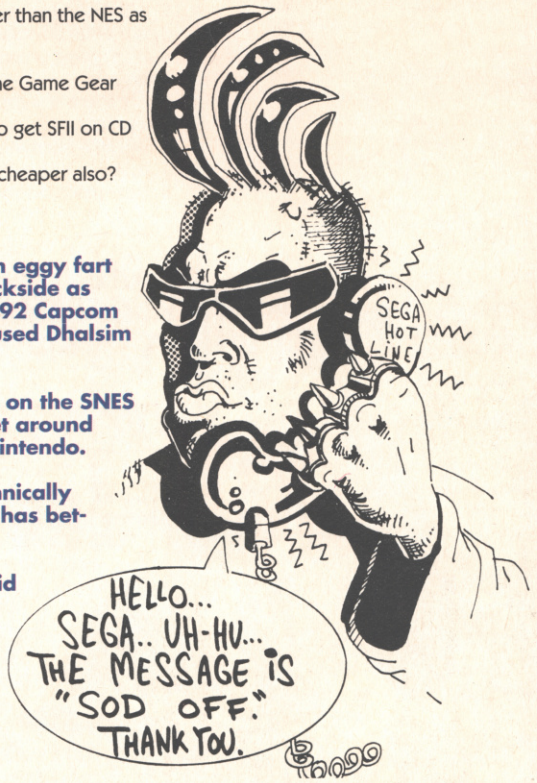
IS JAP GREAT OR PAP?

Dear YOB,
I am writing to complain about that sad git of an A level student called Richard Moulton in Issue 146. He is such a boring old fart who thinks he knows it all. Never mind. Would you please answer my three questions? Ta.
1. What's the best basketball game on the SNES?
2. Please could you put these in order of slowest to fastest: UK SNES, US SNES, JAP SNES.
3. Why is CVG such an ace mag?
SHAWN TILSED
Poole, Dorset
PS Did you hear about the duck?
He didn't!
PPS Please print my letter or I will sick my head down a bog.

YOB: 1. NBA JAM.
2. Slowest: UK (50Hz), joint fastest US and Jap (60Hz). It's a depressing state of affairs, but you might be pleased to hear that most of Nintendo's own games like Mario Kart are specially adapted for use on 50Hz machines.
3. Why not?

DON'T BLAME ME, I ONLY ANSWER THEM

Dear YOB,
Please answer the following questions WITHOUT any of your crap. Thank you!
1. My friend said to me that Dhalsim on SFII is as much use as a chocolate tea pot. What do you think?
2. Does Lost Vikings for Mega Drive look any good?
3. How does SFII SCE compare to SFII Turbo?
4. Please say to my sad friend that the Mega Drive is better than the NES as he won't listen to me.
5. Will there be a sequel to Fatal Fury on the Mega Drive?
6. Why is the Lynx so cheap now (Rumbelows £40) and the Game Gear so expensive (£109!)
7. Give Sega a good THRASHING from me and tell them to get SFII on CD - today, if you please!
8. If the Jaguar is going to be £199, will the Mega-CD be cheaper also?
LEE CHESHAM
Melksham, Wilts.



YOB: 1. Your mate is about as much use as an eggy fart in a submarine and he's talking out of his backside as usual. It so happens that the winner of the 1992 Capcom World Streetfighter Championships in Japan used Dhalsim throughout the contest.
2. It's OK.
3. They're basically the same, although Turbo on the SNES is harder to complete. SCE was so-called to get around Capcom's Turbo contract commitments with Nintendo. So there you go.
4. Why should I? The Mega Drive may be technically superior, but if you want my opinion the NES has better games. Ooh, controversy!
5. Highly likely.
6. Because nobody bought the Lynx. Forty quid is a bargain, and I'd suggest you buy one now. Then get Klax if you know what's good for you.
7. I called Sega on the special Yob Inside Hotline number known only by myself, and they asked me to pass on this personal message, specially for you: Sod Off.
8. If Melksham was blown up, who'd care?

RANT! RAVE! SIGH

Dear YOB,
The price for computer games are cack. Well some are. For instance Streetfighter II for the Mega Drive. £60 is a load of crap. Sega is really sick. They haven't made a decent game yet. I should know because I have a Game Gear. I can complete all the games. I completed Streetfighter II for the Mega Drive the first time I played it. The other thing that bothers me is that some games are going to have certificates which makes me really mad. I think they should stick to 16-bit graphics platform and beat-'em-up games.
STEPHEN HUTCHINSON
Carlisle

YOB: Er... fine. Glad we cleared that one up. Show this copy of CVG to the doctor and he might knock a couple of months off your treatment programme. Then again, he may add a few...

MOST POINTLESS QUESTIONS EVER?

Yo YOB,
I think your idea is cool. I have been dying to ask you some questions.
1. Which computer costs the most?
2. Which is the best computer game?
3. What is the best fighting game?
4. Is Mario better than Sonic?
5. Which computer is the best?
6. What is your favourite game?
7. Which game got the biggest rating?
8. What was the first game made for the Jaguar?
9. What was the first home computer named?
10. What is is worst game?
11. What is the most funny game?
12. What is the most expensive game?
Please give me the money because I want to buy all the CVG mags aso that I get to see your cool comments. Thank you for listening.
RICHARD SANDERS
Somewhere

YOB: 1. It's probably the one that leaves you with the least change, but that's an educated guess.
2. Which one?
3. Samurai Shodown on the Neo Geo.
4. Depends. He's not as fast, but he's better at filling his trousers.
5. What a stupid question.
6. At the moment it's NBA JAM in the arcades.
7. Can't remember offhand. Probably Super Mario World, which would have got about 96 per cent. However, I do remember CVG once rated Chessmaster on the Game Boy at 98. However, that doesn't really count.
8. Cybermorph was the first complete game.
9. The first affordable home computer was the ZX80, a black-and-white machine built by Clive Sinclair, which came out about 1980. You bought the thing in a kit which you had to build yourself with a soldering iron, the entire machine boasted 1K of memory and by today's standards it was completely and utterly crap. (Today's Game Boy cartridges have about 2,000 times more memory). A year or so later Sinclair came out with the ZX81 (still 1K) and in 1983 built the Spectrum - the computer which kickstarted the video games world as we know it. Here endeth the history lesson. If you lot want to know more about the (quite boring really) history of computer games, bung me a letter with your questions and I might even bother to answer them.
10. In my opinion, the Worst Game Of All Time is a complete draw between three games. The Great Space Race on the Spectrum was megahyped and sold squillions on its release before punters realised the whole thing had been written in BASIC and was a steaming great turd. More recently, Dark Castle from Electronic Arts lifted the crown of crapdom on the Mega Drive thanks to its absolutely appalling playability, graphics so bad they defied belief and baddies that went 'Nee Nee Nee Nee' like demented dwarves with piles. Lately, though, the honour of Worst Game In History goes to Ferrari Formula One on NES and Game Boy with its unique 'road moving steering system.' The game is so bad it defies belief.
11. Dark Castle.
12. Virtual reality games which can cost FOUR QUID a game probably take the biscuit. What a rip-off.

ed by MIDLAND BANK plc 1994

GREED, CORRUPTION & THE MIDLAND LIVECASH DEAL

Sue 14

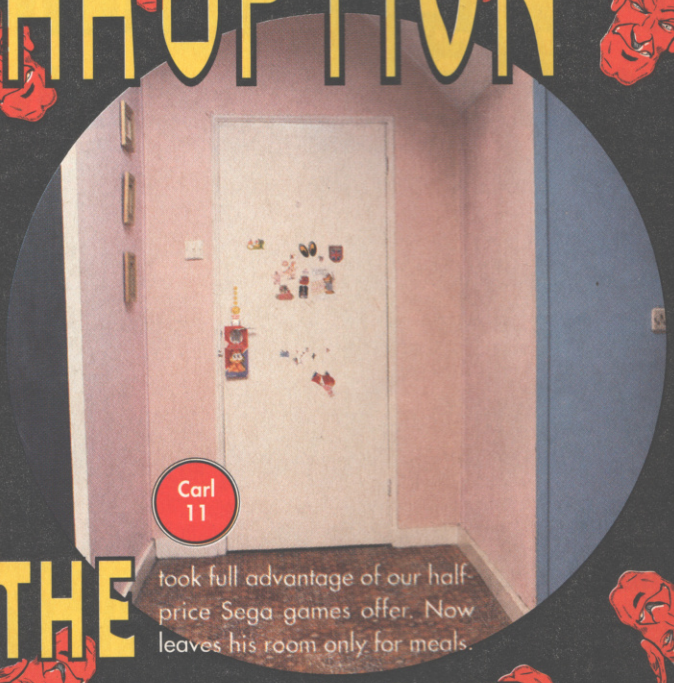
got one of our free Megadrive systems – then charged her kid brother a whopping £3 an hour to use it.

Steve 17

wasted all his cut-price cinema tickets in blundering attempts to impress his sister's friends.

Joe 15

ordered his "Pizza for a penny" pizza and then deceitfully asked his girlfriend to pay half the normal price.



Carl 11

took full advantage of our half-price Sega games offer. Now leaves his room only for meals.

Can you handle it? Opening a Livecash account will bring you many things. Free gifts, competitions. Big money off Sega, Nintendo and Amiga. But it can also bring out the worst in you. You have been warned. Find out more by sending us the coupon, or by asking at your nearest Midland branch, or by calling us on 0345 180 180. Lines are open 8 am – 8 pm, Monday to Friday. All calls charged at local rates. Livecash is available to 11 – 18 year olds.

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PREVIEW

SNES

by OCEAN/ELECTRONIC ARTS

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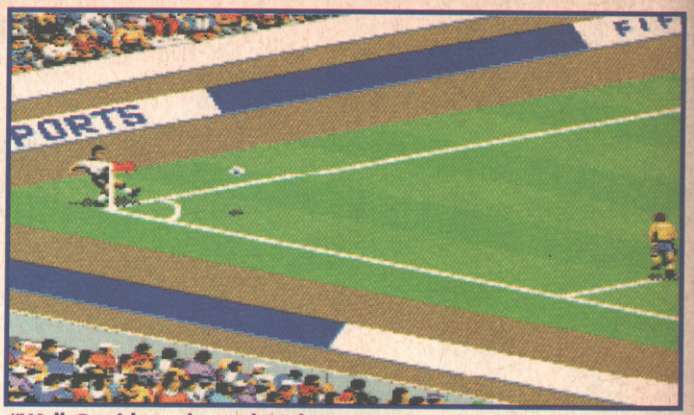
JUNE RELEASE

Stage of Development

100% Complete

FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

Football, football, football. If you've got a SNES it's everywhere – Kick Off 3, Ryan Giggs, and now EA's conversion of its Mega Drive top-seller, FIFA Soccer



"Well, David, yer boy takes the corner, it's a long, low ball to the far post, Ian Wright's in position, and then the Israeli secret police storm the stadium and the game has to be abandoned. Is that right?"

"Well, David, yer boy runs out, tries to narrow the angle and gets savaged by killer clowns." "Er, no Bill."

"Well, David, yer man looks down, finds there's a white star on the turf around him, and realises he's not a real person."

If you've never played the Mega Drive version of FIFA you probably won't have realised that the reason for its success was the speed of play, the stunning graphics and the realistic ball control.

Well, the SNES version has all this and more. The major gameplay difference, though, is the new perfect pass power meter which builds up as you hold down the button, indicating exactly how far the ball will go. Other additions are cosmetic. Things like new player animations for disappointed goalies and strikers, who now fall to the ground, bashing their fists or follow a missed sitter by burying their heads in their hands. There are slow-motion and reverse-angle action replays and the sound is improved, with 'StadiumSound' (TM) and 'The Audience Is Cheering' (TM) which comprises 30 crowd chants and digitised effects. Also, there are Man of the Match awards and, if you have a Hudson Soft Super Multitap, up to five people can play in 2 vs 2, 4 vs 1, and 5 vs the computer modes.

Though it's been programmed and playtested by EA, Ocean is doing the marketing, so watch out for it on its label in June. ●

"This is what platform games should be about... amazingly good fun."
"... a superb platformer which really shows off the SNES.
RBA boasts some of the best graphics I've ever seen."
Nintendo Magazine System 91%

"Challenging, playable and utterly hatstand.
Eat your heart out sonic." "Lovely to look at,
great to play and bags of fun. Buy it"
Total! 90%

"A bit of a must buy, unless you're criminally insane
or terminally stupid." "Konami have once again
proved that they can consistently provide
highly charged and diversified game play."
Gamesmaster 90%

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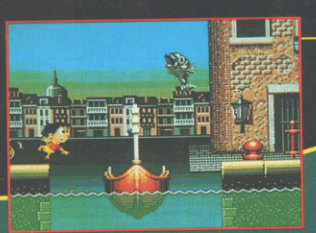
Prepare to meet all manner of madcap characters in dozens of lush, detailed locations ranging from England, to the Italian Riviera, through Russia's frozen forests. Take a ride on Japan's Bullet Train and end up on the rough and tough city streets of the U.S.A. It's awesome arcade action all the way with a blistering soundtrack to match.



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